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**Professional Women's Perceptions & Experiences of Respectability,
Social Status, and Autonomy: a Case Study of Women Employed at
the University of Sindh, Jamshoro, Sindh-Pakistan**

Mukesh Kumar Khatwani

**Submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
School of Law, Politics and Sociology,
University of Sussex**

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List of Abbreviations

A:	Assistant
AASHA:	Alliance against Sexual Harassment
ABT:	Ansar Burney Trust
AJK:	Azad Jamu Kashmir
AP:	Assistant Professor
Assoc. P:	Associate Professor
C:	Coordinator
CO:	Computer Operator
CP:	Computer Programmer
CSS:	Central Superior Services
DAIs:	Degree Awarding Institutes
ECP:	Election Commission of Pakistan
FATA:	Federally Administered Tribal Areas
FBS:	Federal Bureau of Statistics
FST:	Feminist Standpoint Theory
GB:	Gilgat Baltistan
GDP:	Gross Domestic Product
HEC:	Higher Education Commission
HEIs:	Higher Education Institutes
ILO:	International Labour Organisation
JC:	Junior Clerk
KPK:	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa
LA:	Library/Laboratory Assistant
LGD:	Local Government Ordinance
MDGs:	Millennium Development Goals
MFLO:	Muslim Family Laws Ordinance 1961
NCSW:	National Commission on the Status of Women
PCO:	Provisional Constitutional Order
PDCP:	Planning and Development Commission Pakistan
PILER:	Pakistan Institute of Labour Education and Research
PPP:	Pakistan Peoples' Party
PSLMS:	Pakistan Standard Living Measurement Survey
RPS:	Revised Pay Scale
SDPI:	Sustainable Development Policy Institute
SES:	Socio-Economic Status
SPDC:	Social Policy and Development Council
USA:	United States of America
UDHR:	Universal Declaration on Human Rights 1948
UK:	United Kingdom
UoSJP:	University of Sindh, Jamshoro, Pakistan
UN:	United Nations
UNESCO:	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
USEHS:	University of Sindh Employees' Housing Society
WEF:	World Economic Forum

UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX

Mukesh Kumar Khatwani, Doctor of Philosophy

**Professional Women's Perceptions & Experiences of Respectability, Social Status,
and Autonomy: A Case Study of Women Employed at the University of Sindh,
Jamshoro, Sindh-Pakistan**

Abstract

This thesis aims to explore the perceptions and experiences of professional women at the University of Sindh, Jamshoro-Pakistan (UoSJP), regarding their respectability and social status in the workplace and in the community. Additionally, the thesis elaborates on professional women's perceptions and experiences regarding their autonomy and independence, which they have supposedly achieved through their university education and gainful employment. The major contribution of the thesis is that it addresses the lack of feminist research on professional women in the context of the ongoing debate over gender equality in Sindh, Pakistan.

This thesis, by using feminist standpoint theory and intersectionality as theoretical and analytical tools, emphasises multiple identities, rather than focusing on a single dimension of social difference. Additionally, this thesis, by employing a Bourdieusian framework (economic, cultural, social and symbolic capital), explores and examines professional women's identities in relation to their particular spatial locations, as well as the ways that social capital and institutionalised cultural capital intersect with their social and familial backgrounds to produce complex hierarchies. The research asserts that women's higher-ranking position (socially accepted) also has a potential influence on their respectability, social status and autonomy in the workplace and in the community. Because it plays a significant role in establishing influential social networking, which further increases women's symbolic capital. Thus, the thesis explores and establishes links between the respectability, social status, autonomy and independence of these professional women, and the intersection of potential influencing factors (for example, patriarchy, class, caste, familial and educational backgrounds, locale and employment). The thesis, then, discusses how professional women negotiate their multiple identities within certain defined spheres while upholding or regulating the respectability, dignity and 'family honour' that is linked to their modesty (sexuality).

The thesis claims that 'collectivity' is the social ethic or essence of Pakistani society, while 'individuality' has been socially and culturally dishonoured and/or disapproved. Therefore, these professional women, understanding and attributing meanings to these concepts in local context, observed their 'limited' or 'defined autonomy', which is influenced by many potential intersecting factors rather than their gender and/or patriarchy.

Chapter One: Introduction

No nation can rise to the height of glory unless your women are side by side with you; we are victims of evil customs. It is a crime against humanity that our women are shut up within the four walls of the houses as prisoners. There is no sanction anywhere for the deplorable condition in which our women have to live. (Muhammad Ali Jinnah 1944)

1.1. Introduction

Women's status, autonomy or empowerment has been debated at length in the literature on gender, and it has been linked to women's access to resources such as access to land, property, and their access to education and employment (Sathar and Kazi 2000; Jejeebhoy and Sathar 2001). Different variables have been used (in most studies) to quantitatively measure women's status, autonomy or empowerment. These variables include, but are not limited to: participation in decision making within the household, access to financial resources, freedom of physical mobility, access to healthcare; women's fertility, the fear of their husband, and the potential for communication with their spouse etc. (e.g., Caldwell 1982; Dyson and Moore 1983; Ahmed et al 2010; Sathar and Kazi 2000). However, Kabeer (1999), presenting the three dimensions of empowerment (resources, agency, and achievements) suggested that how 'access to resource' is translated into agency (process) and achievements (outcomes) is more important than only having access to resources. This thesis is an attempt to contribute to what Kabeer (1999) suggested regarding the 'translation of resources into agency' by focusing on professional women's experiences of status and autonomy at the University of Sindh, Jamshoro-Pakistan (UoSJP). Specifically, the thesis is aimed at understanding and elaborating on these professional women's perception of and experiences about their status, autonomy and independence (achievements) that they have achieved through their university education and professional job/position (resources).

This thesis begins with the assumption that women's higher educational qualifications and employment (specifically in higher-educational institutions) as resources (Kabeer 1999) is crucial in elevating women's status, autonomy, and social positioning within the household in particular, and in the community in general. However, the positive impact of these women's acquired resources (education and employment) on their status and autonomy could be varied in different cultures, because of the various understandings of and meanings attributed to these terms and other social categories or factors such as family structure, class, caste, locality, region, religion, and ethnicity. As

Kabeer (1999, p. 443) suggests that ‘changes in women’s resources will translate into changes in the choices they are able to make [...this] will depend, in part, on the other aspects of the conditions in which they are making their choices or decisions’. Furthermore, the understanding of, and meanings attributed to the terms ‘status’, ‘autonomy’ and ‘independence’ are perceived differently in certain cultures or societies. Even within a certain culture, these terms are perceived differently, as there is a variation in the conceptualisation of autonomy (Sathar and Kazi 2000). Therefore, bearing in mind the patriarchal structure, this thesis examines the intersections of different categories- such as gender, class, ethnicity, kinship, *biradrari* (community/clan), caste, locale (region), familial and educational backgrounds- which, along with the patriarchy, may influence professional women’s status, autonomy, and independence in Sindhi society. Thus, the main research questions of the study are:

- What perceptions do these professional women in the University of Sindh have about their social status and position in the community?
- What perceptions do these professional women have about the work environment, and how do they perceive their respectability in the workplace and community?
- What are the perceptions of these professional women about their autonomy, and the independence which they have supposedly achieved through their higher education and profession?
- To what extent do patriarchy, gender, class, ethnicity, kinship, *biradari* (community/clan), caste, locale (region), family structure and religious norms influence professional women’s autonomy and independence in terms of decision-making, access to/control over resources (material and non-material, including health and education), and freedom of physical mobility?

The thesis debates how professional women experience patriarchy within and outside of the workplace, and how they negotiate with and accommodate patriarchy (patriarchal bargains) within defined spheres while upholding or regulating the respectability, dignity and family honour that is linked to women’s modesty or sexuality (Bhanbhro et al 2013). In many parts of Sindh- in Upper Sindh, in particular- one can witness the

interplay between feudal¹ and patriarchal norms, and there is a well-known proverb: ‘*zan, zar, zameen*’ (Woman, wealth and land), which is culturally meant that the honour of a man is related to these three ‘things’ (Bhanbhro et al 2013). Hence, one’s family expects the affirmation of family honour from women specifically in paid work, because they have physical mobility and social interactions with people other than family and *biradari* (clan/community or caste). In such cultural settings, a woman takes on a burden of ‘family honour’ when she leaves home for work. Here, a focus of the discussion is the cultural notion of ‘good woman/mother’ and ‘role model’ (Bari 2000; Sathar and Kazi 2000) in a patriarchal setting.

The thesis explores and establishes the link between teaching as a feminine profession, and their working within higher education institutions (universities), with women’s respectability, status, autonomy, and independence. Further, the thesis explores other factors- for example, patriarchy, gender, class, caste, familial and educational backgrounds, place of residence and employment- which may affect women’s respectability in and outside of the workplace. On the basis of these findings, I argue in the thesis that teaching as a feminine profession (i.e., Maqsood et al 2005; Ferdoos 2005; Khan 2006; Ghazala and Khalid 2012) in Sindhi society imbues women with a distinctive identity- ‘teacher’- that is culturally recognised and respected within the community. Feelings as a result of earning this ‘identity’ increase women’s ‘self-confidence, self-esteem and self-worth’ (Ghazala and Khalid 2012, p. 55), which further elevates women’s status and positioning within the workplace and in the community in general. The thesis also argues that the teaching profession, as well as working at universities in administrative positions, creates feelings of ‘happiness and pride’ among women, as well their families. The major reason behind these feelings of happiness and pride is that daughters, from the time of their earliest education, are encouraged by parents to be ‘teacher’ or ‘medical doctor’, because culturally, these two professions are considered to be the most suitable for women in Pakistani/Sindhi society. Secondly, working with educational institutions helps in upholding the self-respect and family

¹ The Mughal Empire nourished the institution of Feudalism in the sub-continent, and later on, the British Empire systematically extended and used this institution to exert control over the vast empire of India, including the state of Sindh (Khan, Dasti and Khan 2013). In Sindh, feudalism is not in that of oldest form in which feudals had maintained private armies or collected taxes. There are many local terms for feudal lords, such as *Wadero, Sardar, Raees, and Bhotar* (Bhanbhro et al 2013, p. 1471).

honour (Khan 2006) which women are supposed to maintain when they leave home for paid work.

Further, the thesis argues that university education, and holding employment at universities (either as faculty members or as administrative staff), elevates women's respectability and social status in the community. However, these women's social status is heterogeneous (Sathar and Kazi 2000) because of their different social categories- such as class, locality, ethnicity, family structure, age, and marital status. Due to this heterogeneous social status, these women perceive autonomy and independence differently, and also have different experiences of autonomy and independence.

Furthermore, my argument in this thesis is that professional women's perception and experiences of their limited or defined autonomy and independence is not merely because of the influence of patriarchy or religion. I argue in this thesis that these professional women have different experiences of autonomy and independence because they belong to different social categories such as class, ethnicity, region etc. Hence, women's status, autonomy, and independence are influenced by many factors- for example; socio-economic class (SES), locale, familial background, kinship, *biradari* (clan) caste and gender-related norms (Sathar and Kazi 2000; Jejeebhoy and Sathar 2001). Gender and socio-economic class may be complicated, and work in a more nuanced way in that these professional women identify themselves as 'women'- a socially marginalized group in Sindhi society. Secondly, because of the intersecting social categories, such as class, gender, ethnicity, locale, profession, etc., these women perceive and experience their autonomy and independence differently. The research asserts that the professional position (higher-ranking, socially accepted, and power relation within an apparently homogenous group- female faculty members and administrative employees) also has a potential influence on women's respectability, social status and autonomy in the workplace and community (Maqsood et al 2005; Khan 2006; Ghazala and Khalid 2012). It insists that higher-ranking positions not only provide more economic incentives but also play a significant role in establishing social networking that further increases women's social and cultural capitals (Bourdieu 1986), compared to those working in lower-ranking positions (Ghazala and Khalid 2012).

The main contribution of the thesis is that it addresses the lack of research on professional women in the context of the ongoing debate on gender equality- in Pakistan in general; and Sindh in particular. Secondly, in the context of South Asia in general

(Gupta 1996; Dyson and Moore 1983; Rahman et al 2008; Bloom, Wypij and Gupta 2001; Thapa and Niehof 2013), and Pakistan in particular, women's status or autonomy has quantitatively been studied with reference to women's fertility and contraception (Sathar et al 1997, 2000; Sathar and Casterline 1988; Saleem and Bobak 2005) as measuring indexes in the context of the classic notion of patriarchy (Kandiyoti 1988; Moghadam 2004). By contrast, this thesis- by employing a qualitative method and an intersectional approach (Crenshaw 1989), emphasises multiple 'axes of identity' or social categories, rather than focusing on a single dimension of social difference- patriarchy and/or gender- in order to examine the status/position of professional women in Sindhi society. This is of significance because of the emergence of a middle class, urbanisation, the spread of girls' education, women's entry into the labour force and the emergence of nuclear family norms in Sindh (though the extended family system is still predominant).

By employing the intersectional approach, the study explores the complexity of data and the differences in participants' experience of patriarchy, status, autonomy, and independence. Hence, the study's major contribution is exploring the social categories due to which these professional women experience heterogeneous status and autonomy while under employment at the same workplace (UoSJP). As a concept, 'intersectionality'- being a new paradigm in gender studies (Winker and Degele 2011) - allows us to take account of multiple social categories, such as gender, race, class, ethnicity etc., rather than focusing on one dimension of social differences (Collins 2000; McCall 2005). Because these social categories or social identities are not a set of separate and/or 'fixed' differences that can be added incrementally to one another, research into intersectionality shows how one identity –race, for example—inevitably alters the meaning of, and is hence interdependent from, factors such as gender and disability (Grunenfelder and Schurr 2015, p. 772).

1.2. Personal Motivation for the Study

The major reason for undertaking this study is my personal interest, working as a faculty member at UOSJP, and my past working experience on gender issues in the province of Sindh.

Soon after completion of my postgraduate studies in Sociology, I started my professional career in a women's rights-based organisation, as a 'Project Coordinator' for the project 'Ending Violence against Women', in collaboration with Oxfam-GB.

During the implementation of this project in eight districts of Upper-Sindh, I had interactions with people working for women's rights, and for their equal position in society. I observed that the focal point of most discussions, seminars, workshops, and projects was that of the feudal system and patriarchy as oppressing factors behind women's vulnerability and low social status in society. My upbringing and socialisation in a rural village—where there is no concept of girls' education and paid employment, though they work in agriculture with family members—and the observation of rural-based patriarchal systems led me to consent with the current discourse on patriarchy and the feudal system.

Later, when I joined UoSJP as a Research Associate, there came a transformation in my initial thoughts of patriarchy and the feudal system being behind the vulnerability of women. Now, my interaction was with a group of women who were in a better social and economic position, and ostensibly free from the influence of patriarchy and the feudal system. I also observed the segregation of women and men in the University, such as separate common rooms for female faculty members, seats reserved for women only on university buses, the lack of women's participation in conferences or within opportunities for academic exposure, and hesitance in interacting with male colleagues. In my personal professional praxis, and through observation of female employees' social position and respectability, I often asked myself: are they enjoying rights equal to men? Are these professional women independent in decisions regarding their own lives, and the lives of those they are intimate with? And, do women's higher-education and employment make them independent, and autonomous? Such questions and assumptions led me to conduct research on professional women in the province of Sindh.

In the beginning, I intended to include 4 public universities² in the province of Sindh in this research. However, later on, realizing the difficulties in achieving this—such as time, money, access, etc.—and the importance of a case study in collecting data on subjective perceptions and experiences (Zainal 2007; Yin 1984), I chose UoSJP as the case study for this research.

² University of Sindh, Jamshoro; Shah Abdul Latif University, Khairpur; Sindh Agriculture University, Tando Jam; and Mehran University of Engineering and Technology, Jamshoro.

1.3. The Context and Rationale of the Study

Pakistan has been described as a patriarchal and traditional society (Sanauddin 2015; Ali et al 2011; Tabassum 2011; Sathar and Kazi 2000) and falls within the ‘belt of classic patriarchy’ where there is ‘a culture against women’ (Kandiyoti 1988; Moghadam 1992, 2004). In Pakistan, most people live in the joint family system; therefore, the role of the family in the reproduction of patriarchy is even more central (Sanauddin 2015). The father, or another elder man (uncle or elder brother), as head of the family, makes all the important decisions regarding the division of responsibilities between family members, arranging the marriages of the younger members, and managing the family estate (Ferdoos 2005). Therefore, male interests dominate those of females, and women are kept away from decision-making processes within the family in Pakistani society in general and Sindhi rural society in particular.

Despite these cultural complications, in rural areas women’s participation in the agriculture sector is huge: but, that is informal, and is not recognised as paid work (Ibraz 1993). This is why women have less control or no control at all of their earnings, and they are dependent though they are contributing to the family income. They are just working as ‘helpers’ of their male family members on agricultural land. On the contrary, women in urban areas are now entering into the formal work force, and somehow they are gaining acceptance of their contribution to the nation in general, and to the family in particular. Women’s entry into the work force has brought about many changes: for example; changes in family patterns, changes in the status of women, changes in the role of women primarily as mothers or reproducers, to breadwinners or producers (Ibraz 1993), within family, as well as in the society in general.

Pakistani society is structured by religious, traditional, tribal customs and a feudal mind-set, which altogether promote patriarchy and the subordination of women (Ibraz 1993), and have also influenced the preference of male children over female. Within the family, a son is raised with the expectation of being head of the family and is taught to be ‘dominant and protective’ (Hakim and Aziz 1998) of the interests and reputation of the family. On the other hand, a daughter is still considered as a burden and a ‘temporary visitor’ to the family (Hakim and Aziz 1998; Bari 2000). Furthermore, women are marginalized in terms of education, healthcare, decision-making, and family matters at every level, and their physical mobility is primarily still limited to the home (Sathar and Kazi 2000). The segregation of the sexes is/was further maintained and

controlled with the institution of *pardah*³; the continued development of traditional thinking and myths which hold that a working woman can never be a good housewife and mother (Bari 2000), therefore, her job/paid work is considered to bring dishonour to the family (Maqsood et al 2005) - even though women's employment has positive effects on the socio-economic status (SES) of the family (Hafeez 1980). Ibrah (1993) argues that in a literal sense, '*pardah*' is meant as the veiling of women's faces and bodies underneath a cloak (*burqa*). Papanek (1971) defines it as a system of secluding women, restricting them from moving freely in public spaces and enforcing a high standard of female modesty upon them. Women, on account of their physical, social, biological and physiological aspects, are still culturally viewed as being closer to nature. The cultural projection of women primarily as mothers and nurturers (Ibrah 1993) has devalued their status, restricted their physical mobility, and secluded them from the outside world (i.e., the 'male' world).

For last two decades, the issue of women's empowerment and gender equality has been one of the key concerns of the central government of Pakistan. Pakistan, being one of the signatories of international agreements and declarations⁴ regarding the rights and empowerment of women has taken on concrete initiatives for the promotion of gender equality. In line with these provisions, the military government⁵ reserved a 10 per cent quota for women in the Central Superior Services (CSS); 17 per cent of seats for women in the Senate, national and provincial assemblies, and 33 per cent in local governments. For the first time in the history of Pakistan, a huge number of women (about 36,105) were elected to district, *tahsil* (taluka) and union council governments in 2001 (NCSW 2010).

As a result of these initiatives, and other factors (such as industrialisation, urbanisation, and feminisation of labour), women were encouraged to aim for a university education and outside employment- particularly in public sector; such as education and medicine. Thus, women's participation in the labour force increased from 16.3 per in 1999-2000 to 24.4 per cent in 2010-2011) (FBS 2011), and teaching in government schools and

³ *Pardah*, meaning curtain or veiling, is commonly used for regulating female modesty in Muslims societies.

⁴ Such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948); ILO Equal Remuneration Convention 1951; Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention 1958; Convention against Discrimination in Education 1960; Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women; 1967the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (1979), the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995); and the Millennium Development Goals (2000).

⁵ General Pervez Musharraf's regime from October 1999-2008

colleges became one of the favoured professions for women in Pakistan. This profession is considered more respectable and suitable for women due to the segregation of sexes, which means it is perceived as being safer for women- because they will have limited direct public dealings with men (Ferdoos 2005; Maqsood et al 2005). However, official statistics show that, while the number of female employees serving within the education profession from primary to the college level is significant, at the higher-educational level it is low, when compared to their male counterparts (FBS 2011). According to the Higher Education Commission's (2014) statistics, there are total of 163 HEC recognised universities/degree awarding institutions (DAIs), out of which 91 are public; and of this 91, seven are women-only⁶ universities. There has been a slight increase (12.94%) in female teachers since 1998-99. In 1998-99, there were 837 (17%) women teachers out of 4911 teachers in public universities, which increased to 5717 (29.94%) in 2007-08 (FBS 2011). The official statistics show that the number of female employees in higher education- faculty members in particular- has been increasing since 2000.

Education and paid work are seen as crucial in terms of their being resources for women in acquiring greater independence from patriarchal constraints (Chaudhry and Nosheen 2009; Malhotra and Mathar 1997). It is argued that women's education, and their participation in paid work (Jejeebhoy and Sathar 2001), increases their involvement in decision-making processes within the household, workplace, and community. This, however, can be limited, due to pre-existing gendered power structures (such as fixed gender roles; male family head; preference for sons), cultural norms (such as; home being the ideal place for women; honour being linked to women's modesty), and religious practices (such as the segregation of sexes and *pardah*). Such challenges include the social value accorded to their educational qualifications in relation to their male counterparts; the attitude of male colleagues towards them; harassment; limited academic exposure, and limited career development opportunities (Ferdoos 2005).

Many past research studies have been conducted on women in lower-ranking paid work, such as women who work as nurses, garment factory workers, bangles industry workers,

⁶ There are both co-education and separate education systems simultaneously, specifically, during the Islamisation period (1979-1988), the government encouraged separate education systems and established women's universities, like separate schools and colleges where only girls get higher education. During the process of Islamisation, under President Zia-ul-Haq, the first Jinnah University for Women was established in 1986 in Islamabad, and so far now there are 7 public and 3 private women-only universities in Pakistan.

agricultural workers, and home-based informal workers (Qidwai et al 2008; Ferdoos 2005; SPDC 2009). However, there is a need to examine whether women's economic empowerment and the higher-educational qualifications of women who are working in higher-ranking positions can result in a corresponding increase in their social status and autonomy.

1.4. Research Site Overview

The University of Sindh, established in 1947, is the second oldest university in Pakistan. It is located at Jamshoro, about 15 kilometers away from Hyderabad city. There are eight academic faculties (schools) and seven distant campuses. In addition, it has four law colleges, and seventy four (74) post-graduate colleges (including 16 private colleges) are affiliated to the UoSJP.

It has a significant number of female faculty members and non-faculty staff, who belong to various parts of the province of Sindh, as well as from further afar in Pakistan. Currently, the total number of faculty members is 509; of them, 159 (31.24%) are women who are serving as Lecturers, Assistant Professors, Associate Professors, and Professors. Some of them also hold key management positions, like Pro-Vice Chancellor, Dean, Director, and Chairperson. The current Vice-Chancellor is also a woman. Additionally, more than 60 women are serving as librarians, computer programmers/operators, assistants, and in various other supporting roles. The rationale behind choosing the UoSJP as case study for this research is based on the following assumptions:

- These women are university-educated professionals and economically empowered; they have the ability and capabilities necessary to compete with their male counterparts in various fields of life.
- Society assumes that professional women have equal status and voice in the workplace and the family. They are also role models and idols for young female students, because of their higher-ranking jobs.
- Generally, it is being assumed that university education has equipped these women with professional skills. Consequently, they are in a better position compared to other working women.

- They have more frequent exposure to and freedom of mobility, which helps them to make a shift from their roles in the family to more professional roles and also, to some extent, help in bringing about change within the existing family/social structure.
- Finally I, as an employee at UoSJP, was in an advantageous position to capture data on the perceptions and experiences of the research participants.

1.5. The Significance and Scope of the Study

This is the first study that has focused the key group of women who are potentially real agents of change and role models for other young women in society. The key significance of this study is that it will pave a significant pathway to knowing the *de facto* position, challenges and restrictions female employees are facing at the UoSJP, and, further, will provide information for legislating and policy-making institutions relating to gender equality in general, and the UoSJP in particular, for creating a more conducive work environment for women. Additionally, it will provide a basis for further researchers who are interested in gender studies- particularly women who are serving in high-ranking professions in Sindh in particular and Pakistan in general. The study will help governmental agencies, departments, and human rights-based organisations by exploring the intersectionality of collaborating factors that, along with patriarchy, have a potential influence on professional women's social status, autonomy, and respectability in society.

1.6. Structure of the Thesis

The thesis consists of 10 chapters, including the introductory and concluding chapters.

Chapter 2 presents a review of the literature available regarding the context of women's rights as given in the Constitution of Pakistan, and in the religion of the state (Islam), in order to understand women's position in society. This chapter also reviews literature on women's status within and outside of the household (in general) and the status of women in paid work (in particular). Furthermore, the chapter critically analyses literature on women's autonomy, empowerment; and the relationship of women's higher-education and employment with their social status, autonomy, and independence.

Chapter 3 presents the Bourdieu's theory of capitals (economic, cultural, social, and symbolic); feminist standpoint theory, and the theory of intersectionality as guides in developing a theoretical framework for this study. Bourdieu's work is employed to

understand how these professional women perceive their status and autonomy while possessing capitals such as economic (employment), cultural (formal education) and social (established social networks), and how they exercise their capitals for making personal decisions. The theory of intersectionality allows us to unfold the intersecting effects of social categories such as gender, patriarchy, caste, class, ethnicity, and region on the lives of these professional women. It further allows comparison of women's positions within the same social class background.

Chapter 4 presents a feminist perspective on patriarchy and its control over women. It engages with theories of patriarchy such as Walby (1990), Kandiyoti (1988) and Moghadam (1992), to show how Pakistani society is patriarchal, and how women bargain with patriarchy for maximum available benefits and life choices. Furthermore, this chapter provides a discussion on the question of whether patriarchy is transforming or stagnating with women's participation in paid work in Sindh, Pakistan.

Chapter 5 discusses the method of research, the sources of data and the procedures followed in collecting and analysing data, and philosophical considerations as well. This chapter also discusses the rationale for the selection of a 'qualitative method' while adding value to the qualitative method by survey data. Finally, this chapter discusses ethical issues for this research, and strategies to overcome these issues.

Chapter 6 presents the organisation of quantitative and qualitative data, and also presents the personal profiles of survey and interview participants. The personal profiles of the participants include participants' ages, marital status, family type, ethnicity, income, locality, education, professional position, and years of work experience.

Chapter 7, discussing the findings, explores the perceptions and experiences of the research participants regarding their professional experience and workplace environment, and analyses the perceptions of these professional women regarding their respectability in the workplace. Furthermore, it explores the link between the view held that the education sector is the most suitable professional environment for women in Pakistan, and the respectability of female employees in the workplace. This chapter also discusses women's experiences of male colleagues' attitude and patriarchal practices in the workplace. The chapter also discusses how these women perceive and experience gender discrimination, practices of favouritism, and harassment in the workplace, and what strategies they prefer to apply in order to tackle these issues.

Chapter 8 analyses the perceptions of professional women regarding their social status in the community, and investigates how professional women perceive and experience social attitudes, patriarchy and male dominance in larger society. Chapter 8 also discusses how professional women perceive or experience patriarchy and societal attitudes towards women in paid work in the province of Sindh; particularly women working in higher-education.

Chapter 9 discusses the findings about women's autonomy and independence, while exploring the participation of women in decision-making; the physical mobility available to women; access to and control over income and resources; and access to health and family planning facilities. The discussion in this chapter significantly analyses the perceptions and experiences of women's autonomy, while considering the presumption that women's higher-education and gainful employment raise women's autonomy, independence and social status within the household and society in general.

Chapter 10 sums up the arguments and concludes the discussion and implications of the key findings demonstrated in chapters 7, 8, and 9.

Chapter Two: Women's Rights, Status, & Autonomy

2.1. Introduction

In this chapter, I critically analyse women's rights as given in the Constitution of Pakistan and Islam, and women's position within the family and within society. There are two main approaches in the feminist literature. The rejectionists argue that Islam and women's rights are simply incompatible, and Muslim women's subjugation systematically lies in Islamic sacred texts (Hashmi 2010). Conversely, the modernists or 'reformists' argue that the Qur'an allows for gender equality, and assures the human rights of women (Wadud 1992; Mernissi 1992, 1991; Hassan 2001). They postulate that the subjugation of Muslim women is rooted in patriarchal structures and cultural norms, in which certain men in power (the elite), or seeking political power, misrepresent religion and culture (Afkhar 2001). My research supports the modernist and reformists, suggesting that gender inequality is deeply rooted in local culture, kinship, regional settings, and socio-political structures.

Existing literature on women's status in Pakistan reveals that women's status is heterogeneous and must be seen in a local cultural context (Sathar and Kazi 2000); however, Islam has a great influence on the lives of women in Pakistan. In Pakistani society, a person's social status is linked to that of family, *biradari* (caste and clan) and the socio-economic status (SES) of the family within the community, hence, an individual (man or woman) defends the family's larger interests (Mumtaz and Salway 2009). However, 'women's professions', like teaching and medicine, elevate the social status and respectability of women in the family, and in the community in general. The most important thing that is linked to women's social status and respectability is 'family honour'; that is further linked to a woman's sexuality (modesty). In the South Asian region specifically in Sindh-Pakistan, there is a well-known proverb: '*zan, zar, zameen*' ('woman, wealth and land'), which generally denotes the way in which the female body is considered as an 'object', like wealth and land, which visibly demonstrates 'family honour'. When that body is seen as a threat to this so-called 'honour', then it is punished with beating, burning, sexual abuse and murder (Bhanbhro et al 2013, p. 1470). A woman who does not question, and gives priority to the family's traditions and norms is considered a respectable 'good woman' in family and society, while one who questions and objects is considered 'bad' or 'disobedient' (Ali et al 2011).

In this chapter, I also critically discuss and analyse women's autonomy, and the factors affecting it in the family in particular and society in general. I explore how the terms of women's empowerment and autonomy are debated in South Asian and Pakistani contexts, and what proxies or indicators are used to measure women's autonomy and empowerment. Further, I explore the association between women's education and employment, and women's empowerment or autonomy; and also, enter into a discussion on influencing factors such as gender systems, class, caste, and socio-cultural norms.

2.2. Women's Rights

Pakistan is not only a member of the United Nations (UN) but also one of the signatories of most declarations and agreements regarding human, women's and children's rights. Pakistan has taken on many initiatives for the protection and promotion of women's equal rights, and gender equality in all walks of life. However, realities are different on the ground. Women are being discriminated against in every sphere, and this discrimination commences in the family. Feminists and women activists in Pakistan (i.e. Shaheed 1994; Patel 2010; Mumtaz 1998; Mumtaz and Shaheed 1987; Sathar and Kazi 2000; Ferdoos 2005; Hassan 2001) argue that discrimination against women lies in the social, cultural and patriarchal structures of society, which favour male domination and segregation of sexes. Therefore, efforts are required to bring changes in the present socio-cultural and socio-political structure in Pakistan by promoting girls' education, and implementing conducive working conditions for women in the workplace.

2.2.1. Women's Constitutional and Legal Rights in Pakistan

Constitutionally, all citizens are equal in all aspects of life, and Pakistan's Constitution (1973) guarantees the full participation of women in all spheres of national life. Practically, however, women are not treated equally in the society, and this discrimination starts from the very first institution of socialisation: the family (Shah 2002, 1986). The 1973 Constitution affirms, in its fundamental rights and principles, that the state is committed to eliminating exploitation. Clauses 1, 2 and 3 of Article 25 read 'all citizens are equal before laws and are entitled to equal protection of law', and 'there shall be no discrimination on the basis of sex alone' and 'nothing in this Article shall prevent the State from making any special provision for the protection of women and children'. Article 27 safeguards women's equal rights to an appointment in the service of Pakistan. It reads as: 'No citizen otherwise qualified for appointment in the

service of Pakistan shall be discriminated against in respect of any such appointment on the ground only of race, religion, caste, sex, residence or place of birth'. The Constitution of 1973 defined a 5 per cent quota for women in all Provincial Assemblies (i.e., 12 seats in Punjab Assembly, 5 seats in Sindh Assembly, 4 seats in KPK Assembly, 2 seats in Baluchistan Assembly). General Musharraf's regime enhanced the reserved quota for women in assemblies, taking it to its highest -ever level of 17 per cent in the Senate⁷, 22 per cent (60 out of 272) in the National Assembly and 17 per cent (128 seats out of 728) in Provincial Assemblies (i.e. 66 seats in Punjab Assembly, 29 in Sindh Assembly, 22 in KPK Assembly and 11 in Baluchistan) (PEC 2013).

The State of Pakistan has introduced various initiatives to empower, promote and protect women's political, economic, social and cultural rights. Pakistan's pursuit of the 'women's empowerment' agenda focuses primarily on: reducing the feminisation of poverty; promoting gender equality; ending violence against women; and introducing the necessary legislation to protect and empower women⁸ (SDPI 2008; PNCSW 2010; Patel 2010). Pakistan's decision in becoming a member state of the 1953 Convention on the Political Rights of Women, and then ratifying the UN Convention on the Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage, and Registration of Marriage, provided a base for legislation on women's rights and empowerment, and resulted in the promulgation of the 1961 Muslim Family Laws Ordinance (MFLO). The MFLO, by regulating marriage and divorce, and restraining polygamy, gives economic and legal protection to women (Weiss 2012).

Realizing the importance of laws which can ensure conducive working environments for women, and protect them from harassment, the Pakistan Peoples Party's (PPP) coalition government introduced the Protection against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act (2010). The law clearly states that each organisation shall constitute an Inquiry Committee consisting of three members, at least one of whom should be a woman. There is also a section of the code of conduct that provides guidance to all

⁷ The Senate (upper house) is a body that equally represents the provinces and other territories of Pakistan. There are total of 104 members, 23 from each province, 2 from Federal Capital, and 8 from FATA.

⁸ For instance, providing micro-credit through the Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF), First Women Bank (FWB), Agricultural Development Bank (ADB) and Khushhali Bank, Benazir Shaheed Income Support Programme, under which women are given skill training with a monthly stipend; distribution of land among women peasants in province of Sindh; reserved seats for women in the Senate, national assembly, provincial assemblies and local governments (33%); and introducing anti-discrimination legislative measures.

employees- including management, and the owners of an organisation- to ensure a work environment free of harassment and intimidation. Pakistan Labour Policy (2010) focuses on the issues of women's empowerment and gender equality and clearly states that female workers will benefit from its application. In 2012, Parliament passed a National Commission on the Status of Women Bill, providing for its complete financial and administrative autonomy.

Presenting an overview of the constitutional and legal rights of women in Pakistan, and initiatives taken by various governments in Pakistan for the promotion of women's right and gender equality, I will discuss women's rights as given in Islam. Islam is the official religion, and Muslims are the predominant religious majority in Pakistan.

2.2.2. Women's Rights in the State Religion, Islam

The word 'Islam' means 'submission' or 'surrender' to the will of *Allah* (God). The other literal meaning of word Islam is 'peace' (Khurshid and Azzam 2010). Muslims believed that Islam, as a religion, is a complete code of life (Zia 2003), and regulates all aspects of life (Hakim and Aziz 1998). Siddiqui (1952, p. 23) argued that Islam is a religion of equality, and also recognises the superiority of both sexes over each other in some respects. Certain domains of work and responsibilities are defined for men and women; therefore, to some extent men are superior to women, and vice versa, in certain matters.

In Islamic societies like Pakistan, the position of women is being assessed in the light of Qur'an⁹ and Shari'a¹⁰, because Islam is not merely a set of beliefs and rituals but is also a social order that has an all-pervading influence on its followers (Zia 2003; Hakim and Aziz 1998). Pakistan as a separate homeland for Muslims came into being on the basis of 'two nation theory'¹¹ (Islam 1981). The foundation of Pakistan was made on religious grounds (Islam); for this reason, Islamic Laws are integral and fundamental to the state of Pakistan and, consequently, its Constitution forbids the enactment of any laws that may be repugnant to the tenets of Islam (Hadi 2003). As Shah (1986, p. 2) suggests; for assessing the status of women in Pakistani society, it is of significance that

⁹ The holy book of Muslims, revealed upon the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

¹⁰ Shari'a, an Arabic word, denotes 'pathway to be followed'. It is the moral code and religious law of Islam, which is based on the precepts set forth in the Qur'an and the example set by the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). It was systemized during the 2nd and 3rd centuries of Muslim era.

¹¹ The two-nation theory, propounded by Sir Sayed Ahmed Khan, means the cultural, political, religious, economic and social dissimilarities between the two major communities; Hindus and Muslims of the Sub-Continent (Islam 1981).

one ‘understand the religious and legal prescriptions related to women’s status’. Similarly, Zia (1998) asserts that the role of women in Pakistani society is strongly defined by religious and cultural/social norms.

In the current debate about gender equality and the equal rights of Muslim women, feminist researchers have articulated two important responses: Firstly, there is a rejectionist attitude or approach, according to which Islam and women’s rights are simply incompatible. This notion is expressed by Ayaan Hairs Ali and Taslima Nasrin¹², who argued that the oppression of Muslim women is not the result of misguided cultural expressions of Islam, but of systematic sanctions for gender inequality and misogyny in Islamic sacred texts (Hashmi 2010,p. 293). On the other hand, there is the modernist or reformist attitude, articulated by Wadud (1992), Mernissi (1992, 1991,1987), and Hassan (2001), who have used Islamic texts to support the advancement of women’s rights, and have argued that the Qur’an allows full gender equality and assures the human rights of women (Hashmi 2010, p. 592).

Afkhami (2001, p. 236), investigating women’s rights in Muslim societies, writes ‘neither Islam nor the culture of Muslim people is *per se* an obstacle to women’s achieving rights’. However, she says Muslim women face patriarchal structures and cultural norms, in which certain men in power or seeking political power misrepresent religion and culture. The function of this misrepresentation of religion and culture is to keep women in such a position where they can serve agendas of male domination or patriarchal structures (p. 236). Justifying this, she gives the example of Iran, where fundamentalist clerics seek to force women back to conditions they have previously exceeded, and Afghanistan, where the Taliban forced women into total segregation (p. 236). The efforts to restrict women to the home and to traditional professions (such as education and medicine) in the name of state religion have also been systematically applied in Pakistan during the regime of General Zia-ul-Haq (1979-1988), by his introduction of the Nizam-e Mustafa¹³(Islamisation) *Hudood* Ordinance 1979, and

¹² A Bangladeshi writer, who attracted international attention in 1994 when an obscure religious fundamentalist group issued a fatwa sentencing her to death and demanding her trial on charges of blasphemy. Nasrin was quoted as saying: ‘I will not be silenced. Everywhere I look I see women being mistreated and their oppression justified in the name of religion. Is it not my moral responsibility to protest?’ (Zaman 1999, p. 42).

¹³ The order of the Prophet Muhammad. The Islamisation programme, introduced by Gen. Zia (1979-88) focused on four major areas: economic programmes, judicial reforms, an Islamic panel code, and a new education policy (Weiss 2003).

Qanoon-e-Shahadat 1983 (the Law of Evidence). School-age girls were forced by presidential order to cover themselves with the *Chador* (Cloth), even in segregated schools, and separate universities and degree-awarding colleges were established for women (Mazari 1983). Weiss (2012, p. 2) writes that:

Pakistan's traditional context [Patriarchal structure], which encourages women to remain in the home, was strengthened under General Zia-ul-Haq's government. His Islamisation programme, initiated in 1979, as well as the proliferation of *deeni madaris* (religious schools) throughout the country, further excluded women from public life.

Islamic Feminism became visible in the 1990s and is an effort to restore the equal status of women as their God-given rights in Islam from the beginning. What makes this feminism 'Islamic' is its basis in the sources of Islam: the Qur'an and the Prophets' examples. Islamic feminists essentially look into the basic texts of Islam in the context of real life situations for concrete ideas and use Islamic categories like the notion of *ijtihad* (the exercise of reason in jurisprudence). The tools can be different (for example, linguistic methodology) but the frame is within Islam. Thus, the Islamic feminist discourse is a Qur'an-centric, one that distances itself from the entangled web of *Fiqah* (jurisprudence) schools, as well as from existing socio-cultural realities of Muslim societies and their customs and traditions (Hussain 2007, p. 67). Roald (1998) observes that Muslim feminists, who in the beginning struggled against women's oppression in Western feminist terms, have shifted their approach to Islam. She presents the example of Mernissi (1975) who, in her book '*Beyond the Veil*', asserted that changes to the condition of Muslim women could not be made within the framework of Islam, whereas later in her book '*Women and Islam: an historical and theological inquiry*' (1991) she emphasises such change has to be made from within Islam, through a reinterpretation of Islamic sources (p. 20). Similarly, Mayer (1999, p. 97) asserts that:

The Qur'an and the example of the Prophet Muhammad provide material that is supportive of extended rights for women, whereas opponents of feminism turn to the juristic traditions and the associated cultural norms, which reflect the values of patriarchal societies.

Muslim feminists (Ahmad 1992; Wadud 1992; Mernissi 1992, 1991; Hassan 1990) raised questions regarding the authority of *Shari'a* and concluded that it is derived from male biases and influences from local cultures that are at odds with Qur'anic ideals. The prominent contemporary Muslims researchers An-Na'im (1995) and Mernissi (1991), as quoted by Mayer (1999, p. 100), 're-examined the sources and concluded that Islam

calls for equal rights for men and women'. Furthermore, An-Na'im (1995, p. 58), analysing Islamic sources- particularly *Shari'a*- writes that:

Shari'a, the divinely ordained way of life and its legal and ethical norms, was the product of a process of interpretation and elaboration of general principles and detailed rules by Muslims scholars/jurists of the second and third century of Islam...*Shari'a* should be seen as an inherently and constantly evolving and changing the ethical and legal system.

Mernissi (1991, p.62) investigated the authenticity of *ahadith*¹⁴ regarding women. She argued that Abu Hurayra, a famous narrator of *ahadith*, was a misogynist; thus, the *ahadith* he transmitted from the Prophet with his own views. Similarly, Abu Shaqqa (quoted by Roald 1998) claims that 'many widespread *ahadith* talking about women in a negative way are forged' (p. 23). Hassan (2001, p. 57), examining the theological assumptions underlying the negative attitudes towards women, argues that:

The Islamic tradition has been and remains strongly patriarchal, that means the sources on which Islamic tradition is based, namely the Qur'an, *Sunnah*¹⁵, *Hadith* and *Fiqh* have been interpreted only by Muslim men who have arrogated for themselves the task of defining the ontological, theological, sociological and eschatological status of Muslim women.

Similarly, Shah (2002, p 23) has quoted Khan (1988) that:

.... Muslims changed the teachings of God and His Prophet and misinterpreted all those verses of the Holy Qura'n in which injunctions about women had been given, and made their women more deprived and more enslaved then. And since the Qur'an, *hadith*, and history were interpreted only by men, they diverted even divine law to their own advantage and snatched from women all those rights, which had been granted to them by God.

The conclusion, then, is that religious scholars and researchers have taken different approaches to or made different responses regarding women's equal position in Islam. The first is conservative in its approach; according to this interpretation, Islam is the religion of equality- however; certain domains of work and responsibilities are defined for men and women. The second is the rejectionist response, which argues that the secondary position or low status of Muslim women is systematically sectioned in Islamic sacred texts. The third approach is the modernist or reformist attitude; according to which, Islam gives women equal rights. In fact, all other Islamic sacred books are compiled and interpreted by males later in the second and third Islamic centuries. Hence, they are biased and misinterpreted- particularly regarding the status and rights of

¹⁴ The plural form of *hadith* is the collection of sayings of Muhammad (PBUH) regarding any matter.

¹⁵ Act or conduct of life of Muhammad (PBUH).

women (e.g. the right to marriage and divorce; the right to education; work; property and inheritance). A contradiction has been noted in the interpretation of women's rights in Islam, as well as a contradiction between women's rights in theory and in practice in Pakistani society. The modernist or reformist response towards Muslim women's rights and gender equality seems the most relevant to this research because the responses of participants in this research show disagreement with the conservative response, as well as with the rejectionist response.

2.2.2.1. *Right to marriage and divorce*

There are a number of *ahadith* on the part of the Prophet regarding the marriage: 'Marriage is my *sunnah*; whoever likes my *fitra* (natural disposition), let him follow my *sunnah*'. Whoever refrains from getting married for fear of having a family is not of us.' (Dahl 1997, p. 50.). In terms of the selection of a life partner, *Shari'a* says a woman cannot be forced to marry anyone against her will, but she is not allowed to marry a non-Muslim man. The *Nikah Khawan* (marriage registrar), who solemnises a marriage, can perform marriage only after seeking the approval of the bride and specifying all conditions (set by her) in contract, including the amount of *mahr* (dower) in the presence of two Muslim witnesses who testify before the registrar. *Mahr* or dower money is an essential part of Islamic marriage; therefore, dower money must be paid or fixed before solemnisation of a marriage.

It is the exclusive preserve of the bride to determine the amount, and it belongs only to her. However, practically, in Pakistani society *mahr* is fixed by the bride's parents and also goes to them while they give substantial dowry to her (Hadi 2003). Thus, she is an equal partner in contracting a marriage. However; practically, the woman herself is not allowed to negotiate her marriage; this is a cultural norm rather than a religious injunction. In general practice, it is only the man who makes a marriage proposal in the presence of two witnesses (Engineer 1993). In such case, it can be done through a *wali* (guardian); normally, the father/brother decides (of course with the woman's consent). There are two different points of views on the issue of consent of *wali*; some religious scholars say that a young unmarried girl is required to appoint *wali*, and in the case of a widow or divorcee, such conditions can be relaxed. Conversely, others are of the point of view that the Qur'an doesn't instruct that a *wali* or marriage guardian is mandatory (Farooq 2003).

Islam gives the right to divorce to both husband and wife but under different conditions for both, however, the most prevailing practice is that in which the husband initiates and is granted a divorce. A husband may divorce his wife by *talaq* —a derivative of the word *tallaqa*, meaning ‘release the animal’ (Honarvar 1988). However, nowadays in most Muslims countries, there are some legal requirements. For example, in Pakistan, MFLO (1961) requires the husband to give the Chairman (of the town or union council) notice in writing, and he must supply a copy to the wife. On the contrary, a woman may get divorce from her husband, known as the *khula*, by *talaq-e-tafweez* or through judicial decree, but she must present concrete evidence supporting her request and the reason for her divorce and further reasons must be viewed in light of the public policy (Honarvar 1988). Moreover, there are *hadiths* in which the Prophet disliked those women who divorce to their husbands: ‘A woman who seeks divorce from her husband without any excess on his part will be cursed by God and his angels’; ‘Women who make a play of their divorce rights are hypocrites.’ (Honarvar 1988)

Pakistan has a lower literacy rate (58 percent in 2012); hence, the majority of people in general (and women in particular) are unaware of their rights and obligations as outlined in Islam. Besides which, local socio-cultural norms influence routine life in Pakistani society. As a result, women’s rights within Islam are largely theoretical, while realities on the ground are different. As Bukhari and Ramzan (2013) argued, social and cultural norms make people sensitive, and in the case of Pakistani society, the existence of significant regional gender differences and women’s low social status prove this reality. Due to the influence of local socio-cultural norms and traditions, region, colonialism and the historical legacy of the Indian Sub-continent (Bukhari and Ramzan 2013), women’s rights as given by Islam are denied.

2.2.2.2. *Right to Education, Work, Property, and Inheritance*

The concept of education is embodied in the *Qur’an* and demonstrated in the life of the Prophet (*Sunnah*) and in His words/sayings (*Hadith*) (Zia 1998). In *Sahih Bukhari*¹⁶ emphasizing the significance of education, The Prophet said, ‘it is compulsory for women and men to get education’ (Engineer 1992, p. 29). Islam does not forbid women to work outside the home. However, Islamic laws favour the segregation of sexes, which primarily emphasises women’s roles within the family, such as bearing children,

¹⁶ The religious book of Muslims consists of collection of authentic *hadith* with connected chains regarding matters pertaining to the Prophet and His practices.

providing a loving home for her family, and obeying her husband's orders (Honarvar 1988). According to the Holy Qur'an: 'Men have a share of what they earn and women have a share of what they earn' (4:32). Hafeez (1980, p. 23), defending women's right to work and property in the light of Islam, writes that:

According to Islamic laws, woman's right to her money, real estate or other properties is fully acknowledged. She has full right to buy, sell, mortgage or lease any or all of her properties. Her share is completely hers, and no one can make any claim on it including her father and husband. Her possessions before marriage do not transfer to her husband and she can even keep her maiden name.

Islam does not deprive women of rights to inheritance; in this vein, the Qur'an says 'men have share in what parents and relative leaves behind, and women also have the right to share, irrespective of whether what is left behind by the parents or relatives is small or large' (Saadawi 1982). However, her share is not equal to that of her brother: 'A female child inherits one-half the amount that her brother inherits' (Honarvar 1988, p. 384). Many religious scholars justify the half -share inheritance as being due to the fact a female child receives a dowry from her parents and *mahr* ('bride price') from her husband and, furthermore, she is not responsible for family expenditures and needs.

From the above discussion, one can conclude that Islam provides fundamental rights to women though they may not be equal to those of men. In the 1990s, Islamic feminism (e.g., Mernissi, Ahmad, Wadud, Hassan) assessed women's rights and gender equality in the Qur'an rather than *fiqh* and the existing socio-cultural realities of Muslim societies, and argued that women's equal position or gender equality can be achieved by revisiting or revising *fiqh* and other Islamic sources as per the true spirit of the Qur'an (Hussain 2007). A contradiction has been shown between the Qur'anic teachings regarding women's rights and what is actually happening to Muslim women: for instance; honour killings, forced/arranged marriages, exchange marriages, the sale of girls for marriage, denial of inheritance rights, and dowry practices in Pakistan. Thus, there are manifold complications, and in the larger perspective, a wider contradiction can be witnessed between women's rights as outlined within the State religion (Islam) as well as in the Constitution, and the *de facto* situation of women's rights and position within Pakistani society. For instance, a wife cannot issue a divorce to her husband, but she can obtain a divorce from her husband through a complicated legal and religious procedure.

In fact, socio-cultural norms and traditions are influencing the routine lives of the people more than religion (Sathar and Kazi 2000); hence, a woman's choice to select her life partner, or demand her right to inheritance are socially and culturally discouraged, and she is labelled with having a 'bad name'. It is considered that through such acts she brings a bad reputation to her family in the community. Thus, all aforementioned women's rights are witnessed in theory, but when it comes to real life, the situation is categorically vice versa, and socio-cultural and regional norms and mores highly influence women's lives (Bukhari and Ramzan 2013; Sathar et al 1988).

Having presented the picture of women's rights in Islam in the above sections, I will go on to discuss women's status and social position in a national perspective in the following sections of the chapter.

2.3. An Overview of Women's Status: A National Perspective

Defining women's status is a prominent issue in the literature in question (Mason and Taj 1987; Schulerm Hashemi and Riley 1997; Balk 1994), in that the use of such a term often refers to a range of behaviours or attitudes. Some authors point to the fact that some conceptualizations of status refer to macro or structural indicators (e.g., Safilos-Rothschild 1982) while others refer to individual characteristics (Hindin 2000). Women's status means their position within the home and within society, relative to men (Khan 2010). Hakim and Aziz (1998) define the term women's 'status' in a Pakistani context as differential 'access to resources such as education, gainful employment, and health services and, the position (power, prestige, authority) that woman has in various situations' (p.730). Safilos-Rothschild (1982) distinguishes women's status from women's power. She states that:

Women's status refers to women's overall position in the society while power refers to women's ability to influence and control at the interpersonal level. Thus, female power can be defined as women's ability to control or change other women's and men's behaviours and the ability to determine important events in their lives (p. 117).

Literature in gender studies (e.g., Agarwal 1994; Sathar and Kazi 2000; Sanauddin 2015; Isran and Isran 2012; Ali et al 2011; Tabassum 2011) suggest that the patriarchal system¹⁷, lack of education, and men's control over land and property- particularly in agrarian societies- are some of the key factors that have kept women's position lower

¹⁷ Male –centred or male-dominated structures and social arrangements that assume male norms operate through all our social institutions, and become the standard to which all persons adhere.

compared to that of men. The status of women in Pakistan is heterogeneous¹⁸ because of their different social classes, ethnic, cultural, regional and rural/urban backgrounds, and level of education; however, in the broader perspective, women's situation is one of systemic subordination. This subordination is deeply rooted in patriarchy, cultural norms and family traditions such as gender segregation; women's paid work bringing 'dishonour' to the family; men being responsible for their families' livelihoods; and the practice of *pardah*, which has been maintained through the state religion (Pananeek 1971; Ibraiz 1993; Shah 2002). Patriarchy to a great extent defines women's roles in everyday jobs, and the status of the common woman is associated with her family (Khan 2010). There are huge disparities between women and men in the field of education, in access to healthcare facilities, employment, political participation and decision-making, and in controlling the resources in Pakistan (Khan 2010).

Pakistan holds the 50th position in the world rank order in terms of women's participation in politics (Hussain 2008) even women have reserved seats in legislative assemblies. In 2013 general elections, only five women (2 from Punjab and 3 from Sindh) won; that working out to be just 1.84 per cent of 272 general seats of National Assembly (PEC 2013); this number has decreased from 9 in 2008 and 11 in the 2002 general elections. Most women in politics are from the elite class and reach assemblies on women's reserved seats through family connections in politics and political parties. Here, a question arises as to how Ms. Benazir Bhutto became prime minister twice, and many other women became ministers or members of legislative assemblies, in a country that is known as a geographical area of classic patriarchy or as a belt of patriarchy (Kandiyoti 1988; Moghadam 2004). Jahan (1987), observing the emergence of powerful female leaders in South Asian countries which are still dominated by values of gender separation and *pardah*, suggests family connections as being the crucial factor behind this. Women's participation in politics in Pakistan might be due to the fact that patriarchy has an incomparable resilience in accommodating itself with the changing socio-economic structures while retaining its main core as male domination over women (Moghadam 2004; Walby 1997; Tabassum 2011). Johnson (1997, p. 7) also argues that 'patriarchy can accommodate a limited number of powerful women so long

¹⁸ In terms of race, culture, regions, languages, socio-economic class such as elite, middle and lower class, social structures such as feudal, tribal and capitalist.

as the society retains its essential patriarchal character, especially in being male identified' (cited in Tabassum 2011, p.43).

In terms of education, women are far behind men. Gross enrolment rate at primary level for boys is 100 per cent while for girls it is 83 per cent; hence, 17 girls out of 100 have no access to primary education. The overall literacy rate is 58 per cent (69 per cent for male and 46 per cent for women), thus, there is a 23 per cent literacy gap between men and women while in terms of employment this gap is 30 per cent (PSLM 2011). The Global Competitive Report (2008) indicates that female participation in the labour force of Pakistan is ranked 2nd lowest of the world- i.e. 127th among 128 countries (WEF 2008).

Since the globalisation and liberalisation of the economic market and the Beijing Conference on Women in 1995, the government of Pakistan has been taking measures through policy, as well as practical efforts to bring women into the labour force, as well as the political mainstream. During the first regime of Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, women's police stations and women's development banks were set up to elevate women's status in society (Khan 2010). However, the major development regarding women's participation in labour and their socio-political and socio-economic empowerment was noticed during the last decade or so. President General Musharraf established the Ministry of Women's Development in 2004, and reserved a 10 per cent quota for women in Central Superior Services (CSS), while the PPP government (2008-2013) took many legislative measures to make the workplace safe and secure for female employees, i.e. the Protection against Harassment of Women at Workplace Act 2010, Criminal Law (Amendment) Act 2010, Women in Distress and Detention Fund (Amendment) Ordinance 2002, the establishment of 26 Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Centres for female victims of violence, and the Benazir Income Support Programme for women. As the result of these legislative measures and available employment opportunities- though low-paid- the female labour force participation rate has increased from 16.3 per cent in 1999-2000 to 24.4 per cent in 2010-2011. Still, a huge amount of recorded female employment- 70.6 per cent and 70.4 per cent- is the engagement in informal economy and agriculture respectively, while only 21.6 per cent of the total comprises waged and salaried workers (FBS 2011).

2.3.1. Status of Women within Family

In Pakistani society, women have been controlled by three different relationships: firstly by their father, then by their husband, and by their son. There was a well-known saying that ‘educating a daughter was like watering the tree in your neighbour’s house’ (Ferdoos 2005, p. 79) and another well-known saying in Sindh is ‘*Dhayer parayo dhan*’ (daughters are others/outside’s assets). This is why parents invest more in their sons than in their daughters. Most of the researchers and local feminists are of the view that there are many factors which determine the status of women in Pakistan. Shah (1986) states women’s status should be viewed as a combination of multiple factors while keeping the significance of existing religious, legal and cultural perceptions related to women. The prescribed role of women in Islam is often argued to be a major determinant of women’s status in Pakistani society (Sathar et al 1988).

Pakistan is one such developing country where tribal, feudal, and capitalist modes of production operate simultaneously (Bari 1991; Mumtaz 2007). In such a heterogeneous society, the roles and status of women within the family vary according to the region, class, and rural/urban background. Throughout, however, the notion of ‘family honour’, linked in various modalities to the sexuality of women (Khawar 1998; Ibraiz 1993), encourages women to be outwardly submissive and to be housewives. This socially and culturally constructed pattern defines ‘home’ as a woman’s legitimate cultural and physical place, and there is a normative expectation that she should be docile, obedient and submissive to family members- particularly to men- and, if married, then also to her mother-in-law (Kazi 1999; Shaheed and Khawar 1990). On the other hand, paid work is seen as a way to enhance the family income and increase to women’s capability to cope with the outside world (Sathar et al 2002). Industrialisation and rapid urbanisation, particularly in the province of Sindh, have changed the position of women within families; as Khawar and Shaheed (1987, p. 21) write:

In Pakistan, as in other third World countries, it is perhaps much more difficult to identify the average woman than in the industrialized countries, because the uneven penetration of firstly colonial rule, and subsequently, capitalist modes of production, have meant that a Pakistani woman’s life can have remained petrified or have been radically altered by the cataclysmic event of her people’s history.

Women in rural areas are extensively involved in agriculture and livestock-tending operations; however, their participation in labour remains relatively unrecognised within the family and society, and they have no direct access to or control over their

income. Therefore, their participation in the labour force has not elevated their social status within the family, or society in general. Ibrah (1993) used the term ‘women’s productive invisibility’ for women working in agriculture, which describes a lack of social acceptance and recognition of women’s productive work, and recognises the fact that they have no authority over their income. However, they play a very important role financially, by contributing physical labour work within the family and on agricultural land as well. Such illustration of these women’s passive or insignificant roles, the over-emphasis of their roles as mothers and wives, and an underestimation of their productive contributions are aspects not merely of their invisibility, but of a distorted visibility (Kazi 1999; Ibrah 1993). Even now, such types of invisibility or distorted visibility of women’s income/productiveness plays an important role in denying them equal social status and rights within and outside of the family.

The rapid process of urbanisation, particularly in the province of Sindh, has resulted in a growing number of middle class in urban areas (Kazi 1999), which has further created a space for women’s education and employment. Research on women in paid work in Pakistan reveals that they work out of economic compulsions (e.g., Ali, Zafar and Hussain 2005; Ferdoos 2005). In the next section, I will discuss the status of women in paid work within the family.

2.3.2. Status of Working Women within the Family

Generally, there is a perception in Pakistan that women’s paid work is against the cultural norms and traditions, and brings dishonour or shame to the family. A working woman is not considered to be a ‘good housewife or mother’ (Ferdoos 2005; Maqsood et al 2005). In rural areas and urban-based families with lower SES and educational background, an employed woman is disapproved of; because the socially prevalent attitude is that a father or a husband feels undignified living off the earnings of his daughters and wife respectively (Ali, Zafar and Hussain 2005, p. 288). Therefore, her paid work is considered a matter of indignity/dishonour (Ali, Zafar and Hussain 2005), specifically in the lower middle-classes, and migrants from rural areas to urban Sindh, despite the fact her employment has positive effects on the SES of the family.

This type of attitude towards women’s paid work, as well as the cultural projection of women primarily as mothers and nurturers, has devalued their status, restricted their participation in communal activities, and secluded them from the outside world (Haque 2010; Ibrah 1993). While women are expected to look after their families and home

needs; however, industrialisation and the rising cost of livelihood has forced women from lower class to enter the labour force, and has changed the traditional patterns of the family. Since 2000, the increase in women's participation in the labour force- i.e. from 16.3 per cent (1999-2000) to 24.4 per cent (2010-2011) - and the increasing number of female industry workers within the figures for total employment- i.e. from 8.4 per cent (1999-2000) to 11.5 per cent (2010-2011) - have improved conditions for women and, to some degree, have given weight to women's say in terms of family matters and decisions (FBS 2011).

The attitudes of parents towards the jobs of their daughters vary from class to class, and from urban to rural backgrounds. Ferdoos (2005, p. 79) concluded that, in urban areas, 79 per cent of the parents of respondents were cooperative towards the jobs of their daughters, 15 per cent were non-cooperative and only 6 per cent were respectful with their daughters towards their jobs. Similarly, Qidwai et al (2008), in their study on the status of working women at a teaching hospital in Karachi, found that 61.5 per cent of respondents feel their status is better than non-working women, and 40.5 per cent of respondents feel that working women's financial independence has a negative impact on their husband's self-esteem.

The above statistics indicate that the parents of working women, whether belonging to urban or rural areas, are very supportive. However, statistics also show that women in paid work perceived that their financial independence has negatively influenced husbands' self-esteem. Such perceptions of women in paid work about their families reveal that parents may feel shame for their daughters' outside paid work, but due to economic constraints, they allow their daughters to work for money (Chaudhary and Nosheen 2009). This type of parental attitude has influenced the social status of working women, and also reflects the general societal attitudes towards women in paid work.

2.3.3. Status of Women in Higher Education

Higher education is one of the most powerful instruments and mediators of social change (Herz and Sperling 2004) and a key to the advancement and empowerment of women by giving them more control over their lives (Khalid and Mujahid 2002). Higher education and the status of women in society are interlinked; that is the reason that, all over the world, education has been a priority of civil society and women's organisations, which are working towards improving women's status in society as well

as gender equality (Bhatt and Sharma 1992). Women's autonomy is indeed distinguishable from their socio-economic status (Mason 1984) while women's education is the most widely-used measure of their relative status and autonomy (Jejeebhoy 1995).

In the Pakistani context, women's education has been found to be a strong explanatory factor for differences in contraceptive use, infant mortality, and children's schooling levels (Sathar et al 1998). Sathar and Kazi (2000) found that respondents' education is strongly and positively associated with their access to resources- but it is hardly associated at all with the perception of economic autonomy or decision-making inside or outside the home (p. 103). This could, perhaps, be because of the low overall attainment levels in rural areas. Ghazala and Khalid (2012), by conducting interviews with 10 women who held seniors posts in a local female university, suggest that the higher-education of women increased their status in the family and society, brought awareness about their rights, reduced their dependency, enhanced their mobility, opened up career opportunities, and enhanced their confidence and self-efficacy (p. 55). Further, their findings suggest that education- especially the higher education of women- is a significant indicator of development, equality and social transformation (p. 51). Malik (2005) concludes that women's economic independence and an increased standing within the family and society are the main benefits of their higher education participation. According to her research findings, 62 per cent of female faculty respondents have complete control over their own income.

In Pakistan, the gender gap in employment in the education sector at primary, elementary and secondary level is not as great as may be expected; while at tertiary level (college and university), this gap is a huge one. Teaching is one of the favoured professions for most women in Pakistan—as this profession is considered more respectable and suitable for women, due to the segregation of sexes, which means this profession is perceived as being safer for women because they have limited direct public dealings (Ferdoos 2005). However, the available statistics show that the number of female employees serving within this 'respectable' educational profession from primary to the college level is significant, but at the higher level is still lower when compared with their male counterparts (table:1). However, the official statistics show a slight increase (12.94%) in women teachers in higher education since 1998-99 (FBS 2011).

Table 1: Distribution of teachers in higher education in Pakistan by Sex
(In per cent)

Years	Arts & Science College		Professional Colleges		Universities	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
1998-99	61.60	38.40	80.01	19.99	82.96	17.04
1999-00	61.85	38.15	80.48	19.52	80.04	19.86
2000-01	61.72	38.28	80.62	19.38	79.25	21.75
2001-02	60.70	39.30	78.47	21.53	75.83	24.17
2002-03	60.50	39.50	78.59	21.41	77.75	22.25
2003-04	58.84	41.16	79.57	20.43	72.49	27.51
2004-05	58.13	41.87	79.44	20.56	72.43	27.57
2005-06	58.88	41.12	75.75	24.25	70.74	29.26
2006-07	59.20	40.80	75.69	24.31	69.49	30.51
2007-08	60.85	39.15	75.00	25.00	70.07	29.93

Source: Federal Bureau of Statistics, p. 119.

Data in the above table shows a satisfactory increase in the number of women employees at universities though they face manifold problems due to fixed gender roles, patriarchy, socio-cultural and religious practices such as the segregation of sexes. However, these problems may also include the lesser social value attributed to their educational qualifications relative to their male counterparts; the biased attitudes of male colleagues; harassment; limited academic exposure and career development opportunities (Ferdoos 2005), and lesser or complete lack of involvement in decision making.

2.4. Women's Autonomy

Most research in gender studies (e.g., Dyson and Moore 1983; Gupta 1996; Jejeebhoy 1995; Sathar and Kazi 1997; Sathar and Kazi 2000; Jejeebhoy and Sathar 2001) in the context of South Asia has focused on women's autonomy to investigate the social position or status of women in the household and society in general. Jeffery, Jeffery and Lycon (1989) found no local translations of the term 'autonomy', but suggested '*azaadi*' or *khudmukhtari*' as the closest words in northern India.

According to Dyson and Moore (1983, p. 45) autonomy is 'the ability—technical, social and psychological—to obtain information and to use it as the basis for making decisions about one's private concerns and those of one's intimates'. Women's autonomy has

been defined as women's enacted ability to influence decisions, control economic resources, and to move freely (Bloom, Wypij and Gupta 2001; Jejeebhoy 2002). Thus, women's autonomy facilitates their access to and control over material resources such as food, income, land, wealth, and other social resources such as knowledge, power, prestige, and communication within the household and the community. In this research, I have used the definition of 'autonomy' as laid out by Dyson and Moore (1983); based on differences between women's status and power¹⁹. Women's autonomy is viewed as 'a set of multiple, but interlinked domains including, but not limited to decision-making authority, economic and social autonomy, emotional and physical autonomy' (Jejeebhoy 2000, cited in Mumtaz and Salway 2009, p.1349).

South Asia, as a demarcated region of 'classic patriarchy' (Kandiyoti 1988) or 'patriarchy belt' (Caldwell 1982; Moghadam 1993, 2004) is known for having sharp inequalities in the power and autonomy of men and women (Sathar and Kazi 2000). Past studies (e.g., Sathar and Kazi 2000; Vlassoff 1992; Dyson and Moore 1983; Caldwell 1982) have found evidence that women's autonomy varies while women's age and marital status are influencing factors of women's autonomy, particularly in developing countries. Evidence from India (Jejeebhoy and Sathar 2001; Sridevi 2005) suggests that autonomy is related to marital status; young unmarried working women likely have more autonomy than their non-working mothers had. In South Asia, generally, women have more autonomy as they get older. Several researchers have theorised that women's lower status or autonomy and gender inequalities are strongly linked to social and demographic positioning in South Asia. Higher autonomy for women is reported in countries and states which have demonstrated more rapid demographic transitions than the other parts of the region- for instance, Sri Lanka and the Indian states of Kerala and Tamil Nadu report higher levels of women's autonomy (Jejeebhoy and Sathar 2001).

Pakistan, as one of the South Asian nations, also falls within the category of countries documented as 'patriarchal belt'²⁰ (Caldwell 1982) or being under a system of 'classic

¹⁹ Women's status refers to women's overall position in the society, while women's power refers to women's ability to influence and control at an interpersonal level (Safilos-Rothschild 1982, p. 117).

²⁰ The 'Belt of classic patriarchy', as defined by Moghadam (1993, p.107), comprises North Africa, the Muslims' Middle East (including Turkey and Iran), and South and East Asia (including Afghanistan, Pakistan, Northern India and rural China). Similarly, Kandiyoti (1988, p. 278) has also demarcated the geographical region of 'classic patriarchy', where women's open resistance is in contrast to women's

patriarchy' (Kandiyoti 1988; Moghadam 1993), where socio-religious and socio-cultural settings are not supportive for women. In a patriarchal society, women are thought to be socialised to be subservient to men, and do not question men's authority. Pakistani society, in its essential organisation and structure, can be defined as a 'classic patriarchy'; the form that is maintained and reproduced through the patrilocal extended household, kinship, tribal and ethnic ties sets the broader level in society (Kandiyoti 1998, p. 278). Pakistan is predominantly a rural society²¹, though a noticeable urbanisation- specifically, in the province of Sindh- has been witnessed in last three decades. Due to this rural predominance, its society is based on kinship, caste, and tribal, feudal, and patriarchal ties (Tabassum 2011; Isran and Isran 2012).

Pakistan, being an Islamic country, is often wrongly viewed as a monolithic community, and women's status has been assumed as homogenous (powerless entities) (Sathar and Kazi 2000). Pakistan is majority Muslim, but Pakistani society is largely heterogeneous in terms of region, culture, language, ethnicity, rural-urban settings and socio-economic conditions. Thus, the status of women is also heterogeneous in terms of the individual and community (Sathar and Kazi 2000), and should be seen in this specific context, as studies have also shown that kinship, marriage patterns (Dyson and Moore 1983) and patriarchal structure (Cain, Syeda and Shamsun 1979) are linked to women's autonomy and status. Earlier studies have researched women's autonomy in the contexts of fertility and infant mortality by using conventional variables such as women's education, age, spousal age differences and the preference for sons (Rukanuddin 1982; Sathar et al 1988). Other studies have also highlighted the importance of enhancing women's autonomy in order to improve maternal health service utilisation in developing countries (Ahmed et al 2010; Furuta and Salway 2006).

2.4.3. Women's Autonomy: The Role of Culture and Religion

Current literature on gender equality or gender empowerment discusses the role of culture and religion as determinants of women's autonomy. The prevailing patriarchal system, religious and cultural beliefs, patterns of tradition, and the dominant social

accommodation of the system, as including North Africa, the Muslim Middle East (including, Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan, and Pakistan), and South and East Asia (specifically, India and China).

²¹ According to the 1998 Census of Pakistan, 67.50 per cent of Pakistan's population lives in rural areas, while 32.50 per cent is based in urban area zones. The province of Sindh has witnessed more urbanisation than other provinces.

ideology (patriarchal, feudal and *Jirga*²² systems) favour gender inequity, which further marginalise and disempower women in Pakistan (Bustamante-Gavino, Rattani and Khan 2011). Jejeebhoy and Sathar (2001) theorise that the cultures of South Asia are largely gender-stratified, and characterised by patrilineal descent, patrilocal residence, inheritance and succession practices that exclude women. They conclude that socio-cultural and regional contexts make a difference in shaping factors that determine women's autonomy in South Asia (p.175). These socio-cultural determinants of a woman's autonomy index are family structure, women's age, and residence with the mother-in-law.

The long history of feudalism that encourages patriarchal norms and uneven democracy in Pakistan have contributed to the oppression of women (Khawar and Shaheed 1989). Using the Freedom House (FH) rating, Fish (2002) finds that Islamic nations are politically authoritative and more oppressive towards women than non-Islamic nations. Similarly, Donno and Russett (2004) find evidence that Islamic nations tend to be more autocratic and are more likely to suppress women's rights. Clark, Ramsbey and Adler (1995), exploring the impact of culture on the female labour force participation in 135 countries in 1980, found that women in Islamic countries and in the largely Catholic Latin American countries had the lowest labour force participation rates. They also concluded that strong Islamic separation of male and female work spheres, and the traditional exclusion of women from participation in paid work in Latin America are a manifestation of the low labour force participation in these countries.

Salway, Jasmin and Rehman (2005) argue that the restrictive *purdah* system of rural Bangladesh symbolises the traditional separation of the male public sphere and female domestic sphere. Dyson and Moore (1983) contend that traditional norms, such as exogamous marriage and male kinship patterns, lead to low status and lesser autonomy for women in Northern India. They found three key principles of North Indian kinship: (i) spouses must be unrelated in kinship reckoning, (ii) males tend to cooperate with and receive help from other males with whom they are blood relatives and (iii) generally

²² According to the Pashto Descriptive Dictionary *jirga* (council) (*jirgas*, a plural form) is an original Pashto word, which in its common uSage refers to the gathering of a few, or a large number of people; it also means 'consultation' according to this source. *Jirga* enjoys authority over the people of its tribe, and therefore is powerful enough to enforce its decisions. There are two types of *Jirga*; namely, traditional *jirga*, at tribal level, and official *Jirga* under the Frontier Crime Regulations in Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) (Ehsan 2009).

women do not inherit property for their own use. Therefore, marriage is dominated by the search for inter-group alliance, and women usually have no choice in the matter (p. 43-44). In such kinship, even the husband's emotional and physical attachment and loyalty strongly remain with his parents' extended family. Similarly, Rahman and Rao (2004) argue that restrictions on women's physical mobility lead to lower labour force participation rates in Northern India. Hakim and Azra (1998), analysing the limitations imposed upon women in Pakistan, suggest that women are facing restrictions of two categories. The first category is that of legal restrictions and inequalities interpreted from the Qur'an, *Hadith*, *Sunnah* and traditional *Sharia* laws, and the second category of restriction is that associated with the enforcement of *pardah*, and the separation of women (p. 730).

Mumtaz (2007), examining the gender-poverty nexus in Pakistan, cites 'religion' as the main medium through which gender bias operates; even in urban Karachi, women feel physically restricted by the responsibility of guarding their honour. She says customary practices- the denial of property and inheritance rights; lack of information about legal, economic or political rights; lack of mobility, and the influence of religion-based forces- collectively deny opportunities to women (p.150). Chaudhury (2010) finds that deep-seated traditions, social and religious norms hinder women's agency. He suggests that the improvement of resources such as better access to quality education, economic participation, favourable labour laws, and inheritance and property rights- is essential for continued progress in women's empowerment (p. 29).

However, women's capacity to control and be in charge of their lives can be affected by patriarchy, cultural and religious values (Ferdoos 2005) and, in some situations, socio-cultural norms can present a challenge to a woman's self-empowerment, and affect women's equal rights and opportunities in society. Thus, in the context of these religious and cultural values and gendered norms (patriarchy), it is problematic to assume that possession of higher-education qualification, a professional job, and economic well-being will provide women with status and rights equal to that of men in society.

As this research aims to explore the perceptions of professional women about their autonomy and status, in the following section I will present a discussion on the role of higher education and employment in giving women autonomy in terms of decision-making, physical mobility and resources.

2.4.5. Higher Education, Employment and Women's Autonomy

Education, as the backbone of any nation's development- especially the higher education of women- is a significant indicator of development, equality and social transformation (Ghazala and Khalid 2012, p. 51). Similarly, the 'human capital' theory asserts that investment in a person's education can improve his or her access to socio-economic development. Women's education and participation in the labour force increases the SES of the family, and also increases women's participation in household decisions. However, they are not considered as total independent determinants of women's autonomy (Sathar and Kazi 2000). Obviously, investment in women's education not only improves the SES of the family, their greater decision-making autonomy, and control over resources, but also ensures better reproductive health for women, and a reduction in the infant mortality rate and mother mortality rate (Sathar and Kazi 2000; Moser 1998). Sridevi (2005) finds that a higher level of education for women leads to their empowerment while participation in decision-making processes within the household, in particular, is the key dimension of women's autonomy and empowerment (Kabeer 2001).

Research (e.g., Sathar and Kazi 2000; Malhotra and Mather 1997) reveals that women's participation in the labour force has increased women's autonomy while the relationship between women's education and autonomy is less clear- though examples of a positive relationship between women's education and autonomy are visible. Ramu (1997) finds employed women have a greater household autonomy, but gender systems and cultural norms at the local level are also important predictors of women's autonomy. It is, therefore, presumed that higher-educational qualifications and better employment can enable one to enjoy household decision-making, economic power, autonomy, and a better social status in the family and in society. Based on this assumption, one perceives that women who possess university-level education, and are in high-ranked jobs also enjoy several socio-economic benefits similar to their male colleagues (Hussain 2008). Such benefits increase their access to decision-making capabilities within the household, community, and at a national level. However, women's own socio-economic and demographic characteristics, as well as the socio-cultural setting (region), may positively or negatively affect their participation in decision-making processes (Gupta and Yesudian 2006; Jejeebhoy and Sathar 2001).

Various research in gender studies suggests gender systems may allocate power to women in some spheres while denying them power in others (e.g., Rahman et al 2008; Kabeer 2001; Mason 1998; Moser 1989). Therefore, the interrelationship between various aspects or dimensions of women's autonomy are affected by a given social context. Thus, women's capacity or ability—supposedly increased due to their higher-education and better employment—to make decisions; to control economic resources, and to have ownership of their lives can be affected by gender systems (patriarchy), cultural and religious values (Ferdoos 2005) and, in some situations, socio-cultural norms can become a challenge to women's autonomy. Thus, in the context of certain religious and cultural values, gendered norms, gender relations, and class and caste systems, it could be problematic to assume that possession of higher-educational qualifications, a professional job, and economic wellbeing will provide women with autonomy and status equal to that of men in the household and in society. The caste system—the inherited structure that rigidly divides people into social classes—is a prominent feature of Pakistani society, and reinforces the feudal system (Mumtaz and Swalay 2009). Thus, education and employment—enabling factors for women's autonomy and empowerment—may not provide women with equal status to men due to the prevalence of strong disabling factors like sociocultural influences, misinterpreted religious norms, and dominant ideologies including caste, patriarchal and feudal systems (Bustamante-Gavino, Rattani and Khan 2011). Further, caste and class factors, along with gender and patriarchy, add more complexity to understanding women's status and autonomy.

2.5. Conclusion

The most important conclusion of this discussion of women's rights is that Muslim women's rights should be seen within Islam, instead of within the context debated in the West. It is argued that Islam does provide women's fundamental rights though they might not be equal. However, the misinterpretation of Islamic sacred books, and the instrumental use of religion by men for seeking political power (elite class) have subjugated women (Mernissi 1992). Many Muslim feminists (for example, Wadud 1992; Mernissi 1992; Hassan 1990; Ahmad 1992) argued that *Sharia* is derived from male biases, and the influences of local culture that odds with Qur'anic ideals. Thus, local patriarchal and cultural norms are misinterpreted and presented as 'Islamic norms'. For example, Islam allows a woman to choose her life partner, but in Pakistan, women

are killed in the name of 'family honour'. The concluding point is that there is a wider contradiction between women's right in theory, and their rights in practice, which need to be elaborated on with other factors- such as class, caste, ethnicity, and regions; and other exploratory factors, such as women's education and employment.

Literature on women's status in Pakistan shows that women's status is heterogeneous at an individual and community level, because Pakistani society is heterogeneous in terms of culture, region, language, urban-rural division, and in socio-economic terms as well. It is argued that women's status and autonomy must be studied and assessed in a local cultural context. Therefore, the developed indices (Malhotra and Schuler 2002; Sathar and Kazi 2000) for measuring women's status, autonomy, and empowerment quantitatively may not be useful because women's perception of their status, autonomy and empowerment, and the meanings they attach to these terms, may vary from one culture to another.

The next chapter will focus on the development of a theoretical framework for this research study.

Chapter Three: Theoretical Framework for this Study

3.1. Introduction

The influence of patriarchy on women in paid work varies, and patriarchy's impact on women in paid work depends on various factors. These factors or social categories include class, the place of residence, family structure, caste, ethnicity, education, and the social background (social class) of women in paid work. Bearing this in mind, I review feminist standpoint theory (FST), which captures the subjective experience of participants from their own perspective. Third-wave feminists have stressed the need for an intersectional approach for analysing gender inequalities, rather than focusing on one dimension of difference such as race/ethnicity, gender or class. Hence, the chapter combines feminist standpoint theory with the concept of 'intersectionality' (Crenshaw 1989), to make a coherent theoretical framework inform the data in this thesis. The theory of intersectionality allows one to bring about complexity, and to study the various social categories, which affect research participants' perception and experience.

The participants of this research are actually a not-so-homogeneous group- professional women who, possessing Bourdieu's (1986) various forms of capital, such as economic capital (being employed), cultural capital (being university educated), social capital (social networks in the workplace and outside) and symbolic capital (gained status and prestige), experience their positions differently, as well as experiencing patriarchy and its effects on them differently. Therefore, I review Bourdieu's theories of capital (economic, cultural, social and symbolic capital) as essential to the theoretical framework for this research. Further, the Bourdieusian theory of capital allows me to look into the various 'resources' these women possess, and how these forms of capitals have elevated women's social status and increased their autonomy and independence within the household and the community in general.

Thus, in this research, the intersectional approach and Bourdieusian concepts of capital work as a complementary framework, because both help in exploring and understanding the complexity and interplay of agency and structure in a certain cultural context.

3.2. Feminist Standpoint Theory

The term 'feminism' tends to be used for the women's movement, which began in the late 18th century. The basic idea behind feminism is that women's position in society is

unequal to that of men, and society is structured in such a way as to benefit men (Farooq 2003). Bhasin and Khan (1999, p.3) define it thus:

Feminism is an awareness of patriarchal control, exploitation and oppression at the material and ideological level of women's labour, fertility and sexuality, in the family, at the place of work and in society in general, and conscious action by women and men to transform the present situation.

Thus, feminism is a struggle to achieve equality, dignity, rights; freedom for women to control their lives and bodies both within and outside of the home. Historically, feminist thought and movement can be divided into three waves. The first began in about late 18th century, and was largely concerned with gaining equal rights for women. The second wave began in the late 1960s; this wave fought for equality and tried to develop a range of theories and approaches to understanding the inequality and oppression of women in social, political and economic structures. Second-wave feminists asserted that male-female relations were political rather than 'neutral', and they politically interrogated sexuality (Jackson and Scott 1996; Pollock 1992; Mouffe 1992). Snyder (2008, p. 184) writes:

...classic second-wave feminism argues that in a patriarchal society women share common experiences, and through a sharing of their experiences with one another in consciousness-raising (CR) groups, they can generate knowledge about their own oppression. Once they realise that what they thought were personal problems (e.g., uneven division of household labour, male-centred sexual practices, domestic violence etc.) are widely shared, they can see the ways in which the patriarchal structure of society produces such problems, and the personal becomes political.

The third-wave began in the early 1990s, as a response to the perceived failures of the second wave and debates of the 1980s that hobbled feminist theory and practice (Snyder 2012). Put simply; it is a rebellion against second-wave 'feminist mothers' (Snyder 2008), however; it does not completely reject the agenda of second-wave feminism (Heywood 2006), and is not an entirely different set of issues or solutions to long-standing dilemmas. Thus, the crux of third-wave feminism is a critique of the 'essentialist woman' of the second wave, which they claimed ignored or downplayed differences among women (Spelman 1988). Thus, third-wave feminism rejects the Universalist claim that all women share a set of common experiences, and stresses instead women's subjective experiences or personal stories. This constitutes one of the central hallmarks of third-wave feminism (Snyder 2012). Third-wave feminism is a discourse for understanding and framing gender relations, which is based on post-

structuralist (Foucault 1980) interpretations of gender and sexuality (Butler and Scott 1992; Mann and Huffman 2005). The third-wave, explicitly questioning the gender binary (male and female), and taking a non-essentialist approach to thinking about gender and sexuality (Snyder 2012), affirms that variation in gender is sometimes tied to sexuality, but that gender and sexuality do not depend on each other (Heywood 2006, p.48).

Snyder (2008, pp.177-181), reviewing third-wave feminist literature in the late 1990s and early 2000s, has found four claims made in feminist literature about how third-wave feminism differs second-wave feminism. Firstly, as a distinctive version of feminism that addresses the new generation's different societal context and particular set of challenges, because their problems or issues differ from their feminist mothers. Secondly, a desire to be less judgmental than their mother's generation, which they often represent as anti-male, anti-sex, anti-femininity and anti-fun. Thirdly, they depict their version as more inclusive and diverse than the second-wave. According to Heywood, third-wave feminism

...as form of inclusiveness, respects not only difference between women based on race, ethnicity, religion, and economic standing but also makes allowance for different identities within a single person, it also allows identities that previously may have been seen to clash with feminism. (2006, p. xx)

Finally, third-wave feminism claims to have a broader vision of politics than second-wave feminism, as they are part of other social movements which address the issues of inequalities and injustice. However, such engagement with other social movements was also characteristic of second-wave feminism.

Feminist standpoint theory (FST) has been developed in a social science context since the 1970s (Smith 1990). The epistemology in feminist thought which has focused on the relationship between women's experience and the generation of scientific knowledge is that of feminist standpoint theory (e.g., Hartsock 1983; Harding 1991). As this study aims to explore the life experiences of professional women, FST, as a framework and analytical tool, can support this research in a number of ways in terms of exploring and analysing the life experiences of professional women from their own perspective. Firstly; FST asserts that the less powerful members of a society experience a different social reality than men- the dominant group- as a result of their oppression (Collins 1989; Harding 1991). Therefore, it can be argued that women as research participants in

this thesis (a sub-ordinated group) interpret social reality differently from men, the dominant group in society. This differently experienced and interpreted reality is based on 'perspectives on women's lives' rather than on 'assumptions and practices that appear natural or unremarkable from the perspective of the lives of men in the dominant groups' (Harding 1991, p.150). In that sense, FST, in this research, helps in exploring and understanding the social reality and social structure (social relationship) in which these women are living, from their own perspective. In this research analysis, women's standpoints will help in understanding these women's actual positioning from their own perspective, instead of men's. This particular or unique perspective on women's lives, that can unmask power relations between men and women or/and within women, is crucial to this research. Women, as outsiders of dominant patriarchal frameworks of thought, can see what is invisible from within 'the social order'. Harding (1991, p. 124) calls this position of marginalised or sub-ordinated group 'outsiders within'.

Standpoint theorists assert that an epistemology generated from the standpoint of oppressed groups such as women is more valid than the knowledge of those in dominant positions in society (Bacon and McClish 2002). Because those who are marginalised/disadvantaged must have knowledge and awareness to understand the perspective of those in power in order to survive women's oppressed position, this also gives them a stronger drive to learn and know more (Harding 1991, pp. 125-26.). Johnson (1989), in his *Autobiography of an Ex-coloured Man* (1912), describes it thus: 'I believe it to be a fact that the coloured peoples of this country know and understand the white people better than the white people know and understand them' (cited in Bacon and McClish 2002, p. 28). Thus, standpoint theorists posit that epistemology depends upon 'socially situated knowledge' (Harding 1991, p. 138) that is determined by the 'knower's' social position, and particularly by the power relationships that structure his or her life. This means that knowledge is not universal, but is situated in times and places. Hence, 'situated knowledge' varies from time to time, place to place and based on the 'knower's' social position.

In this context, FST enables this research in accessing that 'situated knowledge' from the knowers' perspectives and this situated knowledge further helps in order to understand the power relations between women and men, and also between women of different social categories, i.e., class, race, ethnic, and religion. Smith (1990a), focusing on 'insiders' knowledge'- that is; personal knowledge of one's lived experience-

suggests that it is possible to produce knowledge of social reality from an insider's perspective. The present research explores how women perceive and experience their own status and autonomy, hence in this context, FST helps in understanding the social reality of women's status and autonomy from the 'insider's' point of view (research participants). Furthermore, FST defines the subject as constructed by relational forces rather than as transcendent (Hekman 1997, p. 356), while problems emerge from the everyday life of marginalised/oppressed groups in relation to the social structure (Smith 1987) which is imposed on less powerful groups, and is the cause of those problems.

Bearing this in mind, the current research, by employing FST, attempts to understand how the social structure contributes to the problems found in the day-to-day lives of these professional women, from their own perspectives. In this context, Pakistani women's social position is not only different from that of men, but is more complex and heterogeneous because of different social categories. In order to understand these different standpoints of women about their positioning in society, FST allows the researcher to go beneath the surface to reveal the real but concealed social relations (Hartsock 1983, p. 304).

Actually, a standpoint is a social position; in that sense, it enables the researcher to explore and analyse women's subjective experiences and unique social standpoints (Swigonski 1993). Thus, FST enables researchers to observe the social reality of marginalised groups from a particular perspective as well as different perspectives within that particular one; and from a unique standpoint, one can see something more clearly than others. As women are participants of this research, but not a homogenous group, FST helps not merely in understanding the specific perspective of women on social realities, but also in understanding the differing perspectives within a group of women about those social realities.

Use of FST can be consistent with intersectionality, i.e. the analysis of how 'different social divisions are concretely enmeshed and constructed by each other' (Yuval-Davis (2006, p. 205) by exploring the complexity and multiple perspectives in feminist research. However; it is argued that FST can encourage essentialist or monolithic categories such as 'women' (Hekman 1997). Wood (1997) agrees that we must be wary of essentialism, but she believes that it is politically pragmatic to focus on social groups, for example, women (Bacon and McClish 2002, p. 29). Collins, accepting this

standpoint's essentialist or monolithic categories, argues: 'there can be a plurality of experience within the overarching term 'standpoint', because social phenomena such as race, class, gender...mutually construct one another' (Collins 1989, p. 205). Hence, any social or marginalised group's experiences- such as those of women- should be viewed in terms of 'intersectionality'. Thus, bearing in mind the intersectional approach in FST, this research combines both in order to explore and understand women's lived-through experience of status, autonomy and independence.

Standpoint theorists critique the hegemony of traditional male-dominated epistemology, arguing that standpoints are not absolute but situated by social position; they also propose that the knowledge of those who are marginalised is less partial than the knowledge of those who hold societal power (Harding 1991, p. 119), because they may have fuller insights into the social order and have no personal investment in maintaining the status quo (Wood 1997, p. 254). It is argued that standpoint science can attain greater objectivity, which Harding (1991) refers to *strong* or *subjective objectivity* (cited in Henwood and Pidgeon 1995, p. 17). In that sense, FST provides the justification for exploring 'situated knowledge' from insiders' or knowers' perspectives. This research study focuses on the personal experiences of women; hence, FST not only helps in guiding exploration of the lived experience of women, but also provides guidance for analysing these lived experiences.

Thus, FST as a framework and as an analytical tool allows us and helps guide us to explore women's experiences, and how these experiences are influenced by multiple sources such as gender, class, ethnicity, and race, by employing an intersectional approach. FST also stresses the importance of reflexivity in revealing the full range of personal and social influences which inevitably play a role in shaping the form that knowledge takes (Henwood and Pidgeon 1995). FST, therefore, allows the researcher to bring reflexivity in the research, which further helps to overcome subjectivity in research.

Third-wave feminism, in expanding the definition of feminism beyond the experiences of white middle-class heterosexual women (Kokushin 2014), debated race, ethnicity and caste in the context of intersectionality and the interconnectedness of multiple social categories or identities (Crenshaw 1989) and concealed social relations (Hartsock 1983). Third-wave feminism observed that single-category studies have failed in

capturing intersectional differences in relations of power within a single category of difference (Tatli and Ozbilgin 2012) - for example, considering women as a homogenous group. Recognising the importance of multiple categories in gender studies, third-wave feminism stressed 'intersectional research' in capturing lived experiences of women.

3.3. Theory of Intersectionality

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, African-American women working in community organising developed various pamphlets, documents and initiatives for addressing the problems of black women. One of these initiatives, the Combahee River Collective²³, argued that 'race-only or gender-only frameworks advanced partial and incomplete analyses of the social injustices that characterise African-American women's lives... and that race, gender, social class, and sexuality all shaped Black women's experiences' (Collins 2015, p.8). These thoughts of the Collective foreshadow important ideas within intersectionality theory by viewing the task of understanding complex social inequalities as inextricably linked to social justice (Collins 2015).

In the 1980s, critical race feminism—black feminist thought—explored the experiences of discrimination and marginalisation of black women in employment and conceptualised the inter-relationship of class, race, and gender (See Cavendish 1982; Pollert 1981; Westwood 1984; Bride, Hebson and Holgate 2015). Collins (1986), exploring the interlocking nature of oppression (gender, race and class) of black women, argued that the marginality of black female intellectuals—their 'outsider within' status—produced Black feminist thought that reflects a special standpoint on self, family, and society (p.1). In that decade, critical race feminists (e.g., Davis 1981; Hooks 1981; Mies 1982; Spelman 1982, 1988) drew attention to multiple axes of inequality and argued that race, ethnicity, caste, class, gender could not be separate analytical universes. Amos and Parmar's (1981) conceptualisation of the 'triple oppression' of black women and Westwood's (1984) argument that 'black women share a triple, not just a double, burden of oppression through class, gender, and race' (p.10) helped to develop a research agenda for theorising the process of intersectionality.

²³ A community organizing initiative of a small group of African American women in Boston, circulated the position paper "A Black Feminist Statement," which laid out a more comprehensive statement of the framework that had permeated Black feminism as a social justice project (Collin 2015).

In the same decade, a scholarly movement initiated in the legal academy was committed to problematizing law's purported colour-blindness, neutrality, and objectivity (Nash 2008). Thus, intersectional analysis has been developing since the emergence of critical race feminism, whereby feminist research turned from the dichotomy of the gender binary to the reconsideration of differences and inequalities between women (Ludvig 2006). Legal scholar Kimberle Crenshaw (1989) coined the term 'Intersectionality' to underscore the 'multidimensionality' of marginalised subjects' lived experiences (Nash 2008, p 2) when she discussed the experiences of black²⁴ women's employment in the US, where they faced the phenomenon of multiple markers of difference (McBride, Hebson and Holget 2015).

The intersectional approach in feminist theory postulates that different strands of women's identities, such as age, ethnicity, class, nationality sexuality intersect, and the earlier binary opposition, man vs. woman, should not be the only focus of feminist interest. Intersectionality rejects the 'single-axis framework' often embraced by both feminist and anti-racist scholars, instead analysing '...the various ways in which race and gender interact to shape the multiple dimensions of black women's experiences' (Crenshaw 1991, p. 1244, cited in Nash 2008, p. 2). Nash (2008) writes, 'intersectionality, the notion that subjectivity is constituted by mutually reinforcing vectors of race, gender, class, and sexuality, has emerged as the primary theoretical tool designed to combat feminist hierarchy, hegemony and exclusivity' (p. 2).

The imagery of crossroads and traffic, as developed by Crenshaw (2001), occupies a central point in understanding the term 'intersectionality' as...

... What occurs when a woman from a minority group...tries to navigate the main crossing in the city....The main highway is 'racism road'. One cross street can be Colonialism, then Patriarchy Street.... She has to deal not only with one form of oppression but with all forms, those named as road signs, which link together to make a double, a triple, multiple, a many layered blanket of oppression. (Yuval-Davis 2006, p. 196)

The concept of 'intersectionality' has become a new paradigm in gender studies (Winker and Degele 2011) and it seems that discussion of inequality is incomplete without taking into account the concept 'intersectionality' (Collins 2000; McCall 2005)

²⁴ Crenshaw conceptualised the location of black women at the intersection of race and gender and called this 'structural intersectionality'. Within this specific location, black women experience sexism differently to that experienced by white women, and experience racism in a different way to that of black men. (McBride, Hebson and Holget 2015, p. 333)

because it allows us to take account of multiple identities rather than focusing on one dimension of social differences. Thus, the multiple identities are a core interest within intersectional research. These identities are not a set of separate and fixed differences that can be added incrementally to one another.

Research into intersectionality shows how one identity –race, for example—inevitably alters the meaning of, and is hence interdependent with, factors such as gender and disability (Grunenfelder and Schurr 2015, p. 772). Hancock (2007, p. 71) argues that the uniqueness of intersectionality lies in ‘the way in which it conceptualises the constitution of, the relationship between, and multi-level analysis of categories of difference’. The strengths of this approach are that it reflects on ‘otherness’; it strives to avoid essentialised, fixed and homogenised assumptions of identities, and it can be used in both quantitative and qualitative work (McCall 2005; Bilge and Denis 2010). McCall (2005) argues that the introduction of intersectionality theory was vital to sociology, claiming that before its development, there was little research that specifically addressed the experiences of people who are subject to multiple forms of subordination within society. She suggested three approaches to studying the complexity and process of intersectionality, and each of these different approaches has a differing focus (Winker and Degele 2011).

Categorical or Inter-categorical complexity: makes strategic use of categories, and analyses relations of multiple inequalities between socially constructed groups (comparing experiences). Categories are selected in advance and mostly (though not entirely) involve quantitative study.

Anti-categorical complexity: is seen as a deconstruction of analytical categories such as gender, race, and class, and focuses on the ways in which concepts, terms and categories are constructed (rejection of categories).

Intra-categorical complexity: is used for illustrating the complexity of individual lived experience, which transcends the categories of the intersection to which individuals are supposed to belong. This approach falls in-between the anti-categorical and inter-categorical approaches because ‘it acknowledges the stable and even durable relationships that social categories present at any given point in time, though it also maintains a critical stance toward categories’ (McCall 2005, p. 1174). It is concerned with reconstructing intersections of single dimensions on a micro-level; case studies and

narrative research methods are the primary focus (Ludvig 2006; Prins 2006) - for example, comparing experience within defined categories. This research focuses on a group of professional women- however; that group is not actual-homogeneous because of differences in their social categories. Therefore, the intra-categorical approach of intersectionality has been adopted in this research to compare experiences of women within this group.

Further, McCall (2005), mentioning the challenge of taking an intersectional approach, introduces two issues. Firstly, there will be diversity within each category- for example, the limited ability to generalise male and female experiences. Secondly, individuals within an intersectional space (i.e. of two overlapping categories) may be experiencing something significantly different to those occupying one of the categories (McBride, Hebson and Holget 2015, p. 335). There is a seemingly insurmountable complexity, and a fixed notion of differences- because the list of differences appears to be indefinite. This is considered to be a weak point of intersectionality; however; it can be overcome to some extent through the conscious use of categorical approaches, as suggested by McCall (2005).

The theory of intersectionality suggests that various categories such as gender, race, ethnicity, class, religion, age, caste, and other 'axes of identity' interact on multiple- and often, simultaneous- levels, contributing to systematic injustice and social inequality (Collins 2000; Brah and Phoenix 2004). Gender and its intersections with class and ethnicity (among others) are simultaneously subjective and structural (Brah and Phoenix 2004). Studying these intersections allows a more complex and dynamic understanding than a focus on patriarchy or gender alone. In this research, the theory of intersectionality has allowed the exploration of categorical or inter-categorical complexity (i.e., gender, class, ethnicity etc.) and intra-categorical complexity (difference between women), by using categories (Grunenfelder and Schurr 2015) such as gender, class, race, religion, region etc. Thus, intersectionality helps in understanding how these women's status, autonomy, independence, and access to resources differ with the actually not-so-homogenous group (women research participants). Furthermore, it also guides in exploring how women's multiple identities (e.g. as a woman of a different class; as a mother; as wife) intersect to influence their gendered experiences at the workplace. An intersectional approach helps not merely in understanding women's

experiences of status, autonomy, and independence as differing from those men, but also in how they differ within professional women at work and in the community.

In this research study, the theory of intersectionality and Bourdieusian theories of capital work as a complementary framework for exploring and understanding professional women's lived experiences. Both frameworks complement and supplement each other in a number of ways. Firstly, as intersectionality stresses multiple dimensions of difference or inequality rather than a single dimension, and a Bourdieusian framework (habitus and capitals) examines embodied experiences of race, gender, and class (Reay, David and Ball 2005). In that context, combining an intersectional approach and a Bourdieusian framework helps towards a comprehensive understanding of the subjective experience of women, as well as *how* and *why* these subjective experiences are different. Secondly, a Bourdieusian framework allows us to understand the analysis of social class while an intersectional approach allows us to explore intersections of social categories including social class. Thus, jointly, they both assist in a deeper exploration of the embodied experiences of ethnicity, social class, and gender by professional women. Thirdly, a Bourdieusian framework envisages a process in which one form of capital can be converted or transformed into another- for example, economic to cultural to social, and to symbolic capital- while the concept of intersectionality explores differences between intra-categories as well as inter-categories. In doing so, both approaches complement each other.

Finally, the overall capital of different factions of social class is composed of different forms and volumes of the various kinds of capital (Bourdieu 1993) that vary from individual to individual within the same social space (the workplace, in this research). These differences are consequences of complex relationships between classes and class trajectories (Reay, David, and Ball 2005). To understand women's access to capital, and the differences in the volumes and forms of capital possessed by women, an intersectional approach complements the Bourdieusian framework employed in this research.

3.4. Bourdieu's Theories of Capital

A Bourdieusian framework provides ways and justification for understating how women's positions are structured by their habitus, capitals and the field (social space) within which they are located, and also offers ideas as to the kind of role such positioning plays in the construction of their identities. Bourdieu defines habitus as 'an

infinite capacity for generating products-thoughts, perceptions, expressions and actions' (1990, p. 55). Concurrently, habitus also includes a set of complex, diverse predispositions. Habitus is a 'structured and structuring structure' (Bourdieu 1994, p.170). It is structured in the way that the past and present circumstances are brought together in an ordered, rather than a random way. It is structuring in that it helps to shape our present and future practices. Habitus is structured by layers of dispositions, and these dispositions affect how an individual 'perceives and appreciates' (Bourdieu 1990, p. 54) all experiences. Those who come from the same 'material conditions of life' (Bourdieu 1977, p. 63), and who have been exposed to the same 'pedagogic action' (p. 64), have similar sets of dispositions and interests which incline them to 'recognise and pursue the same goods' (p. 64).

Thus, habitus results from choices individuals have made in their lives, but it also affects the decisions individual will make in the future. Families, schools and universities are all institutions which function as fields for the formation of habitus and help to reproduce and maintain social order. Habitus contributes to the values we have, the principles we live by, and our practices in various domains. We learn habitus, but it is unconscious; even pre-conscious, and we do it so well that it appears instinctive. Besides individual habitus, there is gendered habitus, class habitus, ethnic habitus, and other collective or institutional habitus (Moore 2008; Wacquant 2014), which are important for my study as Bourdieu's concept of habitus allows an analysis of social class as complex sociological and psychological processes (Reay 1997). Thus, habitus enables us to understand women as a complex amalgam of their past and present (Bourdieu 1990).

Bourdieu's (1986) theories of capital- also known as neo-capital theories- basically originate from Marx's classic theory of capital, which argues class differentiation is fundamental in capitalist society, where the exploiting (capitalist/dominant) class controls the means of production, and profit from the labour provided by the exploited class (Lin 2001). Bourdieu's various kinds of capital exist in complex connection with one another, and there is a conversion between these forms of capital while economic capital is at the root of all other types of capital (Bourdieu 1986). In using the term 'capital', Bourdieu taps into the language of economics but extends the notion of capital to mean more than the monetary value (Thomson 2008). Neo-capital theories originated from theories of capital, hence 'the capital as an investment of resources for benefit' is

an essence of these theories- such as economic capital, cultural capital, social capital, and symbolic capital (Bourdieu 1986, p. 253).

Bourdieuian theory suggests a social world which is dynamic but not in a constant flux of change; for example, in his work on masculine domination (2001) he argues that there is both change and permanence. In that sense, neither the field nor different forms of capital are fixed entities, but they are the very product of a never-ending process of conflict and struggle (Tatli and Ozbilgin 2012, p.190). Bourdieusian theory of capitals has a great explanatory power in understanding the construction of privilege and prestige, and provides an invaluable conceptual toolbox for diversity research (Ariss and Syed 2011; Tatli 2011). In that sense, Bourdieu's framework has the ability to uncover the interplay of agency and structure, and the interdependence between different forms of capital and the field (i.e. workplace, family and community). Secondly, the use of a theory of capitals to operationalise the intersectional approach deals with, and systematically unpacks, the complexity of diversity (Tatli and Ozbilgin 2012, p.190). In that sense, Bourdieu's framework enables us to understand the interplay and intersection of various social categories which influence professional women's decision-making abilities and choices within a certain cultural context.

Furthermore, Bourdieu's concepts of capital enable us to understand the analysis of social class (professional women). As Reay (1997) suggests; women's social-class origins and their contemporary social-class location influence their negotiation of the social world in myriad, complex ways. In doing this, Bourdieusian theory helps in exploring and understanding the past and present social classes of professional women, and how different social classes have different degrees of influence on women's day-to-day experiences.

In studying gender disparity or inequality, it is necessary to postulate the impact that women's differential access to economic, social, and cultural resources (capitals) has on their lives- because gender, race, and age merely articulate a portion of the differences between women (Reay 1997). Bourdieusian theory, on the other hand, explains and corresponds with various resources (capital)—monetary or non-monetary; tangible as well intangible—that individuals draw on in order to improve their power and influence in a given field (Tatli and Ozbilgin 2012, p.190). In that sense, Bourdieusian theory enables us to understand the various forms of capital professional women have or

struggle for, and how they translate their access to resources (capitals) into power, prestige, status, autonomy and independence within a specific field (work, family or community). Bourdieusian concepts of capital are discussed in the following sections.

3.4.1. Economic capital

Economic capital is wealth either inherited or generated from interactions between individuals and the economy; however, it is more complicated, because the practices surrounding economic exchange have developed over time and within particular fields (Gennrich 2015). One important part of Bourdieu's theory of capital is that individuals are driven by more than economic interests. Individuals' economic choices or decisions are based on strategies to maximise their symbolic capital (prestige and power), cultural capital (educational qualification and credentials), or social capital (contacts, connections and networks) (Bourdieu 1986). In this research study, the employment of research participants is considered their economic capital; therefore, the theory of economic capital works as a theoretical framework in which to understand and explore women's status, and the autonomy they have achieved through their economic capital.

3.4.2. Cultural capital

According to Bourdieu, the education systems of industrialised societies function in such a way as to legitimate class inequalities. Success in the education system is facilitated by the possession of cultural capital and high class habitus (Sullivan 2002, p. 144). He argues that a society's dominant class imposes its culture by engaging in 'pedagogic action' (formal education) which transmits to or internalises the dominant symbols and meanings in the next generation (Lin 2001). Thus, social reproduction is the imposition of 'symbolic violence'²⁵ by the dominant class on the dominated class²⁶. The culture and values of dominant class through pedagogic action (education and trainings) are 'misrecognised' as the culture and value of entire societies. As a result of this process of pedagogic action, the dominant culture and values are accepted and taken in as one's own without any resistance or even conscious awareness on one's part. Therefore, for Bourdieu, educational credentials help to reproduce and legitimise social inequalities, as higher-class individuals are seen to deserve their places in the social

²⁵ According to Bourdieu, symbolic violence is an imposition of symbolism and meaning upon groups or classes, accepted as legitimate. It is related to various modes of social and cultural domination, which is why it is the unnoticed domination that people maintain in everyday living (Udasmoro 2013, p 156).

²⁶ For instance, in this study, men can be taken as the dominant group, while women are seen as the dominated group in terms of gender relations and socio-cultural context.

structure (Sullivan 2002, p. 144). This means that the education system has a key role in maintaining the status quo; as Bourdieu argues:

... It [education] is, in fact, one of the most effective means of perpetuating the existing social patterns, as it both provides an apparent justification for social inequalities and gives recognition to the cultural heritage, that is, to social gift treated as neutral one. (1974, p. 32)

Cultural capital implies the centrality of the family, and it is transmitted through the family. It is from a family that children derive modes of thinking, types of disposition, sets of meaning and qualities of style (Reay 2004, p.58). Bourdieu recognises the centrality of mother as such:

It is because the cultural capital that is effectively transmitted within family itself depends not only on the quantity of cultural capital, itself accumulated by spending time, that the domestic groups possess, but also on the usable time (particularly in the form of mother's free time) available to it. (Bourdieu 1986, p. 253)

Thus, a distinctive alternative theoretical explanation of human capital is Bourdieu's (1986) theory of cultural capital. It is primarily a relational concept and exists in conjunction with other forms of capital (Reay 2004). Bourdieu distinguishes between three states of cultural capital: embodied state, objectified state and institutionalised state. The embodied state of cultural capital is what lies within people; in their minds and bodies; their skills; competence; knowledge; and appreciations. An example of embodied culture important to this research, is the passing on of knowledge and cultural values by these women (teachers) through their formal and informal interaction with females at their workplace, and in the community in general.

The objectified state of cultural capital is the material evidence of capital, such as writings, paintings, monuments, and instruments etc., which is transmissible in its materiality, and defined only in the relationship with cultural capital in its embodied form (Bourdieu 1986). Finally, the institutionalised state of cultural capital is regarded as the importance of giving status such as educational qualifications, awards, diplomas, certificates and credentials (Bourdieu 1986). Bourdieu suggests that this objectification of cultural capital in the forms of academic qualifications is one way of neutralising some of the properties.

In this research study, participants' institutionalised state of cultural capital is their university education, and how that institutionalised state of cultural capital has rewarded

these women with social status, autonomy and independence within the household and society. How does the institutionalised state of capital of these women maintain the norms of the upper and middle classes? Thus, the theory of cultural capital helps in understanding the experience and perceptions of professional women (the dominated class, in terms of gender relations) living and working with male colleagues (the dominant class, in terms of gender at the workplace, as well as in society).

It further helps in analysing and understanding the social position of professional women as cultural capital; focusing on the family helps in understanding the complexity of practices and actions (*habitus*), and cultures/values of the dominant class (elite and upper middle class in this research).

3.4.3. Social Capital

Actually, social capital is a relatively recent development in theory, and research has seen the extension of the neo-capital theories (economic, human and cultural capital) in particular, and the capital theory in general. According to Bourdieu, ‘social capital is the sum of the resources- actual or virtual- that accrue for an individual or a group by virtue of possessing a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition’ (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, p. 119). It is also argued that the dominant class or influential persons have more chances of increasing social capital as compared to the dominated class and socially excluded groups- such as women- in traditional societies. It is a network of connections built up through an endless effort in participating in many essential instances of the exchange of capital, and takes ‘time, attention, care and concern’ (Bourdieu 1986, p.54). These established social relations and networks further reinforce identity and recognition- therefore, recognition of one’s worth as an individual not only provides emotional support, but also public acknowledgement. Thus, social capital- capital captured through social relations and networking- is simply defined as ‘investment in social relations, with expected returns in the marketplace’ (Lin 2001, p. 19) - and that marketplace for analysis may be economic, political, labour, or community. It helps individuals by various means, such as providing information, influence on agents (recruiters or supervisors of the organisation), social credentials (acknowledged relationships of the individuals may be taken by agents as certification of his/her credibility), and reinforcement of individual identity and recognition (Lin 2001).

Thus, the theory of social capital works as a theoretical framework for exploring and understanding how these professional women benefit from increasing and establishing social relations, and networking in the workplace and in society in general. Further, social capital theory helps in understanding the different intra-categories of women's social status and autonomy, while investigating their access to social networking. For example, one can examine the different status and position of academic and non-academic groups; Sindhi and Urdu speaking; lower- and middle-class women.

3.4.4. Symbolic Capital

Symbolic capital is manifested in individual prestige and personal qualities, such as 'authority and charisma' (Reay 2004, p. 57). It has a complex relationship with other forms of capital, and symbolic capital increases from the 'successful use of other kinds of capital', meaning when one of the different kinds of capitals is converted into prestige (Bourdieu 1990 cited in Gennrich 2015). Bourdieu (1998, p. 47) defines symbolic capital as:

... Any property (any form of capital whether physical, economic, cultural or social) when it is perceived by social agents endowed with categories of perception which cause them to know it and to recognise it, to give it value.

According to Bourdieu (1990), symbolic capital is linked to habitus because people choose it, and defend investing in what they value as capital according to the structure of the habitus or through the 'lens' of their habitus (Lehmann 2007). In this research, women's higher-education and employment at the university are examples of this, because if a woman believes she will bring symbolic capital, she will work and invest in attaining both (education and employment). Therefore, symbolic capital is the effect of any kind of capital that gains its power and prestige based on how society is structured (Gennrich 2015), and on what society values. This research aims to explore experiences of women about their status, autonomy and independence, which will be explored in terms of women's access to resources such as education (cultural capital) and employment (economic capital). Professional women's status, autonomy and independence are results of how they have converted capitals (economic, cultural and social) into symbolic capital. Therefore, symbolic capital is particularly relevant to this research in order to explore differences between men and women, as well within a group of women.

3.5. Conclusion

The chapter reviewed feminist standpoint theory, and the theory of intersectionality. Feminist standpoint theory allows understanding of the subjective experiences of the participants about their experiences of patriarchy, social attitudes, their social status, autonomy and independence. This is because FST asserts that women experience a different social reality from men because of their oppression (Harding 1991). It is argued that an epistemology generated from the standpoint of oppressed groups (women) is more valid than the knowledge of those in the dominant position (Bacon and McClish 2002). Therefore, in this research, FST is relevant for exploring and understanding the social reality and social structure in which these women are living.

The theory of intersectionality asserts that gender position fails to understand the complexity of difference and gender inequality (Ludvig 2006); however, other intersectional social categories such as social class, ethnicity, caste, family etc. are significant in understanding women's position in society. Thus, the intersectional approach in this research allows us to understand various 'axes of identity', and patriarchy's intersection with the multiple identities of the research participants.

The chapter also reviewed Bourdieu's theories of capital in order to develop a theoretical framework for this research. A Bourdieu's (1986) framework is inclusive in terms of analysing the complex ways professional women form their identity while rejecting another identity. Because it addresses the structure of social class, it gives rise to fields in which specific types of capital are valued. Thus, Bourdieu's approach to establishing the understanding of the social classes and capitals of these professional helps in exploring and understanding these women's experiences of patriarchy, and their experience of autonomy and independence. Thus, these theories together contribute to better understanding of patriarchy and gender relations, and their impact on the social status, autonomy and independence of women in paid work in Sindh [Pakistan].

The next chapter explores patriarchy, its transformation, and its influences on women in paid work in Sindh-Pakistan.

Chapter Four: Exploring Patriarchy & Women in Paid work

4.1. Introduction

In Pakistan, class (Sathar and Kazi 2000), feudal (Isran and Isran 2012) and patriarchal systems ‘classic patriarchy’ (Tabassum 2011; Ali et al 2011) exist, and play a vital role in determining the position of women within the family as well as in society. Nationally, patriarchy shares specific features whereby men, in one way or another, are privileged over women. Therefore, in this chapter, I attempt to explore the feminist perspective on patriarchy and its transformation as a part of a contextual framework, to develop an understanding of the specific way the patriarchy operates and influences women in general- and professional women, in particular- within Pakistan. Elaborating on patriarchy, I attempt to find answers to the some key questions:

- Does patriarchy exist in educational institutions, and affect women’s entry into the teaching profession, as it is ‘rationally’ assumed best for women? And;
- How does patriarchy affect the social position, physical mobility and autonomy of female employees in higher education?

I critically examine feminist writings on women’s public and private spheres; the gendered process of socialisation, and the social construction of ‘femininity’ (including ‘good woman or motherhood ideal’). Analysing the existing literature and feminist discourse, I argue that patriarchy, though maintaining its control over women, has been transforming in Sindhi society (Tabassum 2011). As a result, women have a greater public role in the society. In this thesis, I argue that professional women’s perceptions and experiences of status and autonomy in Sindhi society cannot be explored or assessed without examining the intersectionality of various factors- for example; locale, family structure, socio-economic class, socio-cultural and kinship settings- along with patriarchy. Available literature also suggests that patriarchy, in the context of Sindhi society, has transformed or changed its shapes and forms, in that women’s outside paid work is recognised and appreciated. Further, I attempt to explore the construction of feminine roles and gendered-bias socialisation in early years, which play an important role in women’s decisions and choices about their profession in later life.

In this chapter, I reflect on the status of women in paid work especially women working in the higher-education sector. Past studies suggest a positive change in attitudes of the family, as well as society, towards women in paid work. However, women in paid work

face discrimination and harassment at work as well outside. Thus, the discussion is organised under the main headings: Patriarchy in Pakistan, Women's domain in patriarchal social structures, and Feminisation of labour in Pakistan. Furthermore, these main headings are sub-divided and discussed in detail.

4.2. Feminist Perspectives on Patriarchy

Patriarchy is arguably the oldest example of exploitative division of labour and social activities. Generally, patriarchy refers to male domination and male supremacy over women. Conventionally, Weber (1947) referred it to as a system of government in which men ruled through their position as heads of households (cited in Walby 1990). Patriarchy, as the hierarchical system in feudal/agrarian societies, is variously defined: 'a system of relations between men, which formed the political and economic outlines of feudal and some pre-feudal societies, in which hierarchy followed ascribed characteristics' (Hartmann 1996, p. 175); elder man's authority over all family members including younger men (Kandiyoti 1988); and 'the rule of men as heads of households over households' economies and extended family affairs' (Barrett 1988, p. 10). Mitchell (1974) referred patriarchy to the kinship system, and Mason and Taj (1987) referred patriarchy to a set of social institutions that deny women the opportunity to be self-supporting, thereby making women dependent on male relatives for their survival.

Feminists challenged patriarchy and identified its very presence even in contemporary modernised and industrialised societies. They redefined it as a system of gender inequality rather than a system of feudal social relations (Beechey 1979; Johnson 1997). Thus, the term 'patriarchy' has a central place in feminist literature, and is crucial for an analysis of gender inequalities across cultures. As Walby (1990) writes: 'Patriarchy is indispensable for an analysis of gender inequality as it captures the depth, pervasiveness and interconnectedness of different aspects of women's subordination within the households, community, and society' (p.1). Similarly, Lim (1997) points out that patriarchal institutions and social relations are responsible for the inferior or secondary status of women. Correspondingly, Johnson (1997), presenting the picture of male domination in a patriarchal system elucidates 'positions of authority- political, economic, legal, religious, educational, military, domestic are generally reserved for men' (p. 5).

4.2.1. Transformation of Patriarchy

Definitions of patriarchy suggest that patriarchy is/has been the central focus of feminists' thoughts and considered as the root cause behind the subjugation of women across the globe. However, its influence on women's lives has been diverse from one society to another and, since the expansion of urbanisation, industrialisation, and globalisation, patriarchy has been transforming. Various feminists (i.e., Walby 1997; Kandiyoti 1988; Sharabi 1988; Moghadam 1993) have explored different forms or types of patriarchy, which are briefly discussed in the following sections:

Walby (1997) presented two forms of patriarchy: private (or more domestic gender regime) and public (or more public gender regime). Private patriarchy is based on traditional or agrarian/peasant societies, in which the male (patriarch) is sole authority. On the other hand, public patriarchy emerged with the expansion of capitalism. She argues that in advanced capitalist societies, private patriarchy based on the traditional patrilocal extended family is weakening, and a new form of 'public patriarchy' is growing. Unlike the complete exclusion of women from the public sphere in private patriarchy, the base of public patriarchy lies in the segregation and subordination of women within the structure of paid employment, and the state. However, the household is still the principal structure in public patriarchy. Further, she asserts that at least abstract-level patriarchy is composed of six structures: the patriarchal mode of production; patriarchal relations in paid work; patriarchal relations in the state; male violence; patriarchal relations in sexuality; and patriarchal relations in cultural institutions (including religions, media, and education) (p. 20). These different forms or structures of patriarchy are a continuum of the above-mentioned two main types of patriarchy.

Sharabi (1988), studying the prevailing patriarchal structures of Arab society and the introduction of new state laws- particularly of Muslim Family Law- has identified a form of patriarchy known as 'neopatriarchy'; that is, 'neither modern nor traditional'. He argues that the modernization of Arab society has failed to break down the traditional forms of patriarchy, however; the material modernization has given a modern form to existing patriarchal structures in Arab society. Similar to 'classic' and 'private patriarchy', neopatriarchy is 'the dominance of father', and according to Sharabi, neopatriarchy as a 'distorted modernity' is the cause of women's sub-ordination. He anticipates women's possible emancipation in true modernization (a unique historical

development), that occurred in its original form in Western Europe (p. 3). Thus, Sharabi predicts the emancipation of women in modernization, while Walby argues that patriarchy does not lose in an advanced capitalist society, but it changes its form from private to public. Thus, Walby's (1997) analysis and interpretation of patriarchy is particularly relevant to this study, because her interpretation suggests that patriarchy changes its forms due to changes in socio-economic and socio-political structures of society. However, that changing structure of family, society, or state still retains its core in male domination. Therefore, patriarchy still is the central point of gender studies.

Kandiyoti (1988) introduced the concept of 'classic patriarchy', and explored the significance of the reproduction of classic patriarchy based in the operation of the patrilocal extended household, which is also commonly associated with the reproduction of peasants in agrarian societies (p. 278). She brings women's agency for maximizing their survival within patriarchy into focus, and question why women reproduce patriarchy within classic patriarchal societies. She finds a new way 'for the identification of different forms of patriarchy through an analysis of women's strategies in dealing with them' (p. 275). She analyses the position of the mother-in-law in the family, and suggests women 'buy in' to patriarchy because there is a 'pay out' when they become senior 'mother -in- law'. Further, she contends that women strategize within a set of concrete constraints, in order to maximise their security and life options (p. 274). She termed these strategies 'patriarchal bargains' that may also vary according to class, caste, and ethnicity, and may determine women's gender subjectivity and the nature of gender ideology in different societies (Tabassum 2011).

The 'women's life cycle' is another noticeable feature in classic patriarchy. For example, a younger or newly married girl has no power and say in the household, but later on, being a senior woman (grandmother), she enjoys more power within the household. Thus, the deprivation and hardship she experiences as a young bride is eventually superseded by the control and authority she will have her own subservient daughter-in-law. Therefore, this cyclical nature of woman's power in the household and the anticipation of inheriting authority as a senior woman reproduces patriarchy (Kandiyoti 1988).

The class and caste impact on classic patriarchy creates additional complexity. For example, in upper castes (Sayed in Muslim and Brahmin/Rajput in Hindu), and the elite

or upper middle class, the withdrawal of women from nondomestic work is a mark of ‘social status’; institutionalised in various speculation and exclusion practices, such as the *purdah* system and veiling (Kandiyoti 1988). For example, statistics show that 50 per cent of women in Pakistan who graduated from medical colleges, never practiced as a medical doctor or worked in any capacity²⁷.

In the context of classic patriarchy, women are considered a form of property (Hirschon 1984, cited in Moghadam 2004), and women’s or the family’s honour depends in great measure on women’s virginity and good conduct (Moghadam 2004, p.141). Thus, women’s honour, in fact a family’s honour, is linked to gender appropriate looks and behaviour and to maintaining and protecting the patriarchal, heterosexual institution of marriage (Menon 2012; Sathar and Kazi 2000; Kandiyoti 1988). Therefore, the question of gender-appropriate behaviour is inextricably linked to legitimate procreative sexuality, which is strictly regulated to ensure the purity and continuation of crucial identities, such as caste, race and religion (Menon 2012; Mumtaz and Salway 2009).

Endogamy²⁸ (i.e. cousins and cross-cousin marriages), and consanguineous marriages or marriages with relatives which lead to virtual village endogamy (Sathar and Kazi 2000) is a wider practice in Pakistan. In this type of marriage, there is a possibility of support and security extended by parents for a woman’s marital or other conflicts, as in-laws (Isran and Isran 2012). However, this type of marriage helps in reproducing patriarchy and maintaining patriarchal norms, because women do not normally have claim on their father’s patrimony (dowry; bride price) as it is given to the bridegroom’s kin and does not take the form of productive property such as land (Agarwal 2003, 1994; Sharma 1980). Secondly, a Muslim woman does not insist upon inheritance rights—as given in Islam—due to fear of losing her brothers’ favour. Her brother may be her only alternative in the case of ill-treatment by her husband, or divorce (Kandiyoti 1988).

²⁷ According to BBC report more than 70% of medical students are women, however only 23% of registered doctors are females. The report further says ‘in social gatherings, it is very prestigious to introduce your daughter-in-law or wife as a medical doctor’ (BBC News 28 August 2015). Also see Ikram Junaidi (2014).

²⁸ Endogamy is the dominant marriage pattern in Pakistan, according to Pakistan Demographic and Health Survey (2013) more than half of all marriages (56 percent) are between first and second cousins. First cousins marriages are more common on the father’s side (28 percent) but also occur between first cousins on the mother’s side (20 percent), 8 percent of marriages are between second cousins, 9 percent are between other relatives and one-third (35 percent) are between non-relatives (p. 65).

Patriarchy within the context of Pakistan shares the key feature, whereby men are privileged over women, but has nation-specific features. In Pakistan, there is generally a segregation of sexes maintained through the centuries' old cultural and religious practice known as *Pardah*, and patriarchy norms, which play a significant role in fixing roles and responsibilities based on gender. In Pakistan, patriarchy describes a distribution of power and resources within families, which are maintained and controlled by men, and which render women powerless and dependent. The kinship system, the political system, and religion (Sathar and Kazi 2000) are the structural element of patriarchal control over women. Kinship in this context is based on patrilocal marriage, in which women move into their husband's localities, while religion as an ideology and, as the normative force, channels behaviour and expectations (Cain, Syeda and Shamsun 1979). Further, one of the key essentials of the Pakistani family, the sexual division of labour, plays an important role in keeping gender-appropriate looks and behaviour intact. This sexual division of labour is not limited to individual households but extends even to the 'public' arena of paid work and, again, this has nothing to do with 'sex' and everything to do with 'gender' (Menon 2012; Walby 1990; Shaw 2000).

4.2.2. Patriarchy and Intersectionality

Many theorists and feminists also are of the opinion that patriarchy does not mean every man has power over a woman in every context (Lim 1997). On the contrary, 'patriarchal interests overlap with system[s] that also reinforce class and race privilege as well as other valences of social stratification' (Chesney-Lind 2006, p. 9). Therefore, patriarchy is not only a component, but is the intersection of multiple factors relevant at all levels of the social ecology (Dekeseredy and Dragiewicz 2007 and Heise 1998) - for instance; religion, class, caste, ethnicity, family structures, rural/urban divide, and gender system etc.

Pakistani society is Muslim-dominated, and studies in Europe and the USA (Fetzer and Soper 2005; Laurence 2007; Pfaff 2007) argue that Muslim migrants support patriarchal values more strongly even if they are second-or third-generation migrants. Religiosity is an important factor in promoting patriarchal values, and religious Muslims might be more patriarchal than non-religious Muslims (Burn and Basu 2005; Hood, Hill and Williamson 2005). There is also an argument that Muslim society might exhibit higher

base levels of patriarchal values because they lack a democratic tradition, not because of Muslim social domination (Alexander and Welzel 2011, p. 252).

Similarly, family structure is one of the key factors- along with patriarchy- for determining the social status and position of women in Pakistan. Pakistan is a predominantly rural society, and there is a common practice of endogamy: 'consanguineous marriages that lead to virtual village endogamy' (Sathar and Kazi 2000, p.105). Thus, such types of organised but very complex systems of social control (village endogamy or extended family) have a potential influence on women, as well younger men, and the relationship between household members are determined by the social structure of the family. The system of gender or gender relations is also a key factor in assessing the social position of women. Two understandings on the household model that can be employed by sociologists to understand gender relations within the household and family are: Unitary Household Model (Becker 1960), and Bargaining Household Model (Agarwal 1994). The first model, focusing on the integration of the production and consumption activities, treats the household as a unit of altruistic decision-making (i.e. extended family or kinship) and the welfare of each family member is normally integrated into the unified family welfare (Kabeer 1994 cited in Isran and Isran 2012). According to Becker's Unitary Household Model, the head of the family is male, and has greater control not only over resources, but also over the lives of the family members in general, and women in particular.

By contrast, the bargaining household model- which emerged in the literature of gender studies in the late 1980s (Sen 1990) - focuses on a 'complex matrix of relationship, in which there is ongoing negotiation subject to the constraints set by gender, age, type of relationship and outdated undisputed traditions'(Agarwal 1994, p. 45). Sen (1990) suggests a person's bargaining position stems from the person's 'perceived interest response' and 'perceived contribution response' (cited in Isran and Isran 2012, p. 847). Thus, those persons would have less say or be treated unfavourably, who do not attach, or attach less value to personal welfare (perceived interest) and do not contribute, or contribute less to the household (perceived contribution). However, Agarwal (1994) suggests that the essence of this model is the 'bargaining position' of each family member and the better or stronger fall-back position (access to resources, e.g. employment, ownership of land etc.) of a person, the more their favourable outcomes. Thus, according to this model, there is no ultimate authority (as in the unitary household

model), but there is a continuous process of cooperation and conflict; compromises/negotiation and accommodation.

In Pakistani society, like in other Muslims societies, women are not primarily responsible for the family's economic needs, and the man is considered the 'breadwinner' (Bari 2000; Fedoos 2005). As Kabeer's (2000) study in the context of Bangladesh suggests, women's access to waged work outside the home—forms of work that take women into the public domain matters, in terms of change—appear to constitute a greater threat to male authority in the context of conjugal relations than in other family relations. Therefore, resistance has also been seen from men whose wives' access to work 'will' make them insubordinate or unfaithful, or undermine their own role as family breadwinner (Kabeer 2001, p. 44). She further suggested that:

Generalisation about [the] impact of work on women's personal choices and relationships are difficult to make with any confidence because these impacts vary so much by women's life course and upbringing, by the nature of the work in question, by the acceptability of different kinds of work in different contexts, by the reaction of men within their households, by the concessions women have to make to take up paid work and by the room or manoeuvre by the wider community. (Kabeer 2001, p. 51)

The forms of waged work that take women into the public sphere with respectability may offer a greater likelihood of change associated with their autonomy and empowerment. Better professional jobs in the public or private sectors promote women's voices in the household, and their capacity to negotiate the terms of their relationship with husbands and other dominant members within the family. Such types of work are also more likely to give rise to new kinds of identities for women beyond those ascribed on the basis of their gender, as they can offer women a greater sense of their own agency and, in many cases, a greater awareness of their own individuality. (p. 51). Similarly, Agarwal (2003) suggests women's accessibility to outside earnings, employment, enhanced social capital, and better career development opportunities can further enhance her bargaining position within the family and outside.

4.2.3. Women's Domains in Patriarchal Social Structures

Patriarchy is one of the predominant factors, which still influences the position of women within, as well as outside of the family in South Asia. Pakistani society is clearly divided into urban and rural areas, and into various socio-economic classes (upper, middle and lower). Therefore, patriarchy, in different forms, has various degrees of stronghold from province-to-province, region-to-region, and rural-to-urban localities

within Pakistan. It can be seen relatively strong in tribal and rural settings/areas (such as Balochistan, Northern Sindh, Southern Punjab and Northern tribal areas (FATA) as compared to urban upper and middle classes, in which women being educated and engaged in paid work may develop strategies to negotiate and accommodate their position- as Kandiyoti (1988) termed it, 'patriarchal bargains'. The 'classic patriarchy' (Kandiyoti 1988, p. 278), or the so-called 'patriarchal belt' (Caldwell 1982) still has a stronghold in rural and tribal areas, where women work on agricultural land with their male family members without having control over their earnings or their own lives (Tabassum 2011). Nowadays, patriarchy, in rural areas, is also losing or changing its form because of the increasing participation of women in economic activities, the spread of education, available vocational opportunities for rural women, and advocacy campaigns by national and international non-government organisations.

On the other hand, women from the upper and/or middle classes have greater access to education and employment opportunities, and can assume a degree of control over their lives as compared to rural women (Ferdoos 2005). Women's role as producers and providers was never socially and culturally accepted, and preference was given to sons due to their economically productive roles, and their roles as heirs of the family. The ideological demarcation between public and private, inside and outside worlds (Ibraiz 1993), is based on patriarchy and maintained through the notion of honour and *Pardah* (veiling). The purdah system is related to status, the division of labour, interpersonal dependency, social distance and the maintenance of moral standards; the two conceptual formulations used to analyse the system with reference to these factors are 'separate worlds' and 'symbolic shelter' (Papanek 1971, p. 1). Further gender segregation is also informally regulated through the system of socialisation within and outside of the family.

Socialisation plays a significant role in transmitting and establishing patriarchal norms. It makes women learn compassionate and emotional roles, which later on influence women's personalities and make them '*sharifzadi*' ('decent') and '*gharelo*' ('domesticated') instead of independent citizens equal to men. Besides socialisation, social structures (e.g. patriarchal power relations, class structure, public/private division, educational and political institutions, and the labour market) play an important role in limiting women's mobility and independent participation in economic, social and political activities (Mumtaz 2007). In patriarchal societies, women's sexuality is

considered a potential threat to the honour of the man and family (Ibraiz 1993). In Pakistan, a common practice which is linked to the honour of the family is honour killings. The practice of honour killings is variously termed in all four provinces of Pakistan. In Baluchistan, the act of 'honour' killings is termed *siyahkari*; in Sindh, *karo kari*; in Khabar Pukhtunkhwa, *tor tora*, and in the Punjab, *kala kali* (Malik, Saleem and Hamdani 2003). The practice involves the murder of a female member of the family by a relative (in most cases a brother or cousin) because she is thought to have brought dishonour to the family by breaching the code of 'decent behaviour' (ABT 2005). This violation of 'decent behaviour' can be anything such as a woman refusing an arranged/forced or early marriage, seeking a marriage of her own choice, seeking a divorce, flirting and even in the case that she is the victim of rape. Lari (2011, p.38) in her research reported 475 cases of honour killings in 2008, 604 in 2009, and 557 in 2010.

4.2.4. Home-based Gendered Processes of Socialisation

Liberal feminism, which is based on principles of individual agency, has debated how the process of socialisation contributes to the continued oppression of women and strengthening patriarchy. Liberal feminism has emphasised 'the socialization of men and women into different roles, reinforced by discrimination, prejudice, and irrationality, as responsible for women's unequal position in society' (Waylen 1996, p. 7). Stanley and Wise (1993, p. 93) define socialisation as 'the process by which children are transformed into social beings who have taken on particular norms and value, and know what kinds of behaviours are expected of them'. Sex role socialisation is the process through which 'Children come to be not only social beings but either 'feminine' or 'masculine' ones' (p. 94) and transmits the social expectations from one generation to another.

Gender role socialisation theories claim that differences in the behaviour of the two genders stem from cultural beliefs/values about the natural abilities and appropriate behaviour of both men and women, and such cultural beliefs and appropriate behaviours are often the results of social structure (Eagly and Wood 1999). Nonetheless, those beliefs can form pervasive constraints on the behaviour of men and women, powerfully shaping their decisions, even in the absence of overt external pressure. The pervasive constraints can be understood in the perspective of Bourdieu's concept *habitus* (1990). He defines *habitus* as a 'system of durable, transposable dispositions, structured

structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organise practices of representation that can be objectively adapted to their outcome without presupposing a conscious aiming at end or an express mastery of the operation necessary in order to attain them' (Bourdieu 1990, p.53). Thus, habitus is not determinist to which people just comply with and conform external structures, but in reality, it must be understood as contributing to a general direction (Osella and Osella 2000) where they compromise, bargain, negotiate, and violate the official picture of social relations (Swartz 2002). Bourdieu's analysis (habitus) has never been directed at groups, but at 'the field' within which relations are played out (Osella and Osella 2000, p. 13). Thus, the field as a social location (family, work place) plays an important role in influencing an individual's choices and life decisions.

Feminist socialisation theorists suggest that girls learn a relational role and sex-appropriate behaviours through the gendered socialisation process in their childhood and that further plays a key role in framing their approach to life and work. Similarly, 'Habitus generates perceptions, expectations, and practices that correspond to the structuring properties of earlier socialisation' (Swartz 2002, p. 635). As a result, a large majority of women choose 'sex-appropriate' careers such as teaching, nursing etc., and are reluctant to pursue power (Smith 2007). Initially, the child adapts to particular behaviours within the family unit, and she acts according to these learnt behaviours in her social world (Millett 1969). Similarly, Sharpe (1976) suggests a child learns behaviours of the person to whom s/he is physically attached.

In patriarchal societies like Pakistan, the mother-daughter relationship is crucial. In Pakistani society, a girl child's training or socialisation is, by and large, considered to be the responsibility of female elder members like the mother, grandmother or elder sisters of the girl (Khawar and Shaheed 1987; Rehman and Biswal 1993). Mothers are primarily considered responsible for training their daughters in accordance with the social models and ethics assigned for girls. Mother is held responsible for her daughter's improper action and misbehaviour, and considered incapable of socialising her daughter in an appropriate way that would have made her a 'good woman' (Ambreen and Mohyuddin 2012). Therefore, girls are generally limited to domestic activities, like assisting their mothers in doing household chores and looking after their younger siblings. Hence, mothers are more physically attached to their daughters, while emotionally; mothers may be more attached to their sons, as he would be expected to

eventually become the head of the family. This type of relationship and physical attachment makes girls adopt the feminine ‘relational’ role (Sharpe 1976, p. 77), which affects women’s approaches to and choices in their later lives.

In Pakistan, parents generally socialise, as well as behave with, their male and female child differently. Parents encourage a five-year-old girl²⁹ to behave differently from a boy in her outer behaviour as well as in developing inner control. Whether consciously or unconsciously, parents seek to focus the attention of their children variously by giving them appropriate objects, activities, and toys. For example, girls are given dolls, pots, and dishes, etc. on the contrary; boys are given guns, aeroplanes, bikes etc. (Ambreen and Mohyuddin 2010). These toys/objects play an important role in shaping their personalities, as well as affecting their choices for future studies and career. Girls are also discouraged from spending time in outdoor activities. Furthermore, girls are discouraged from being noisy and rough in their play, and are trained to adopt an attitude of care and service towards male members of society (Ambreen and Mohyuddin 2010).

4.2.5. Social and Cultural Construction of Feminine Roles

Pakistan is a segregated society, where the segregation of sexes starts from the very first agent of socialization: the family. The way gender ideology is constructed varies from one culture to the other (Cornwall and Lindisfarne 1995). In the family, ‘motherhood ideal’ (Smith 2007) - a powerful image of femininity- plays a key role in framing women’s lives, their role in society, and their career choices. In Pakistan, the socially and culturally constructed gendered ideology is that male children were/are nutritionally more privileged compared to their female counterparts (Bari 1991), because boys are an asset of the family and responsible for their parents in old age, while daughters are temporary members of the family and have to move to their husbands’ family (Bari 1991). Such types of social expectations and cultural segregation of sexes are transmitted from one to the next generation as one of the factors in the self-continuation of patriarchy.

Hussain, Mumtaz and Saigol (1997, p. 31) say ‘women are forced to remain tied to their fertility and their biological roles... although the picture is beginning to change now,

²⁹ In her 5th year, she begins schooling and she has interaction with other children (boys and girls) outside of the family; hence she is taught to avoid boys and behave like a girl.

this is happening far too slowly'. Culturally, a *gharelu*³⁰ (domesticated') or *sughar*³¹ ('domestically skilled') (Bari 1991) woman is considered 'an ideal and good image' for other women. Lessons on being a good mother and wife are also incorporated in syllabi from primary to secondary and tertiary levels of education in Sindh (Pakistan). Such education plays a very important part in the construction of gendered roles and the further segregation of men and women in society (Shah 1986). Culturally, a son's birth in the family is greeted and celebrated with the distribution of sweets among friends and relatives. On the contrary, a daughter's birth³² is not greeted or celebrated- as Shah (1986) writes, 'she is considered inferior and a source of guilt and agony at birth' (p. 54). Khawar and Shaheed (1987, p. 23), confirming this practice in Pakistani society, write that

The attitude towards women as inferior beings is visible from the birth of a girl, which is greeted with guilt or despair on the part of the mother, shame or anger on the part of the father, and the general concern and commiseration of the entire circle of friends and family.

In the above sections, I discussed patriarchy, its transformation and influence on the lives of women, and the reasons why women themselves reproduce patriarchy. As this research focuses on professional women, hence I will overview the feminisation of labour in Pakistan, women's employment (particularly in higher education), and the complexity and intersectionality of other factors that, along with patriarchy, influence women in paid work.

4.3. Feminisation of Labour in Pakistan: Is Patriarchy Losing?

The term 'feminisation of labour' is used in two different ways. Firstly, it is used for the rapid and substantial increase in the proportion of women in paid work over the last two decades. Secondly, it refers to the increased flexibility of labour for women and men that has increased low-paid or flexible female labour (Kanji 2001). Feminisation of labour, in fact, is linked to the sexual division of labour. For example, teaching and nursing (particularly at lower levels) are considered the most suitable professions for women, and are hence comparatively ill-paid in relation to other white-collar jobs.

³⁰ A woman who prefers to stay at home; very obedient and submissive to male members as well as to elderly women of the family such as mother-in-law/grandmother-in-law.

³¹ A women who is highly skilled in domestic chores like washing clothes, making dishes, serving food to family members and so on.

³² I myself witnessed this on the birth of my first baby girl. I was happy and invited my villagers for having some sweets and drinks/tea. I was surprised to see when none of villagers were happy and greeted me as well as none of them brought some presents for newly born baby girl. On the contrary, when I celebrated the birth of my baby son, they came with presents and were very happy.

Feminists argued that such ‘feminization’ of teaching and nursing is because such work is seen as an extension of the nurturing work that women do within the home (Menon 2012; Ghazala and Khalid 2012).

South Asia, being a developing region, witnessed a major shift in work patterns and gendered roles. These changing patterns of paid-work, as well as societal structure, have either attracted or pushed women into paid work, and Asia became the place with the greatest labour force figures in the world. In 2005, Asia had 57.3 per cent, while South Asia accounted for 21 per cent of the world’s labour force. In South Asia, the female labour participation rate was 35 per cent in 2008, and Pakistan had very low female labour participation (21 per cent) for the same year (Reddy 2013). Labour force participation rates are very uneven among the South Asian countries because of large differences in the female participation rate and gendered norms.

In Pakistan, women’s labour force participation rate is significantly lower compared to other regional countries (for example, 32.4 per cent, 42.4 per cent, and in 36.8 per cent in India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka respectively). Kahn and Khan (2009) found that in Pakistan, decision-making within the household is predominantly considered as male privilege. That is why female labour participation is ranked the lowest in South Asia. Furthermore, the gender-role ideologies and social and cultural restrictions on women’s mobility are also major reasons for low female participation in the labour force (pp.77-78). Similarly, Papanek’s (1971) argument that women’s participation in paid work generally carries low values in Pakistan, still holds in the twenty-first century, and only a few jobs- related to teaching and medicine (doctors) - are considered prestigious for women (Ferdood 2005; Shah 2002).

In Pakistan, the male labour force participation rate is 53.4 per cent, while the female labour participation rate was 24.4 per cent in 2010-2011. This has slightly increased from 16.3 per cent in 1999-2000 (FBS 2011). Factors determining the employment of women are extremely complex, as Pakistani society is class-based, as well as tribal and feudal, simultaneously. Shaheen, Siyal and Awan (2011) have categorised determining factors of women’s employment as ‘at individual level’ and ‘at aggregate level’. At the individual level, women’s decision to work is subject to factors such as their education level, skills and the availability of jobs, while at the aggregate level, female labour force participation is largely determined by the economic, social and demographic

circumstances of the locality under consideration (p. 104). Particularly in a society divided by income groups, women belonging to lower-income classes are more likely to participate in the labour market, as large family size and economic burden might push mothers into the labour force (Ahmad and Hafeez 2007).

Pakistani society is class-based (Sathar and Kazi 2000). Hence, at household level, the determinants of labour force participation of women depend upon the socio-economic background of working women. Women from elite and middle classes, with at least a graduate degree (14 years of education), are employed in high skilled and high-status jobs- such as doctors, lecturers, superior civil servants, army officers, bankers, and business executives. The majority of women from elite and upper-middle classes enter the labour force to pursue a career, or for their personal fulfilment- as higher-ranked positions are considered a symbol of social status where financial necessity is not the main reason for taking up paid employment (Sayeed, Javed and Khan 2002). Reasons behind this may lie in the family's sound socio-economic position, and in religious values. The prescribed role of women in Islam is often argued to be a major determinant of women's status in Pakistani society (Shah 1986). Women are viewed as wives and mothers, whereas economic provision for women is the responsibility of men (Sathar et al 1988; Ferdoos 2005).

The second category is classified as middle- or lower-level professionals with intermediate (12 years' education) and technical certificates- including nurses, paramedics, telephone and computer operators, and clerical workers. The third category is classified as women from poor households, who work in low-income occupations in the informal sector. This group of women includes factory workers, informal sector workers such as domestic servants, casual workers, vendors, and home-based women workers (Khan and Khan 2009).

4.4. Societal Attitudes towards Women in Paid work

In the past two decades, there has been a change in Sindhi society. Women are encouraged to work, and their work is getting social acceptance; however, negative attitudes towards female employment also exist in the society, and vary among different socio-economic and rural/urban backgrounds. Furthermore, work also provides economic security and family stability. Hafeez (1982, p. 35) argues that, unlike in other cities, 'a woman in a big city like Karachi is less restricted in her physical movements. The women in medium-sized cities of Pakistan are slow to emerge from seclusion'.

Shah (2002) conducted a study on female entrepreneurs in Karachi and found that most of the respondents had no objection to working outside the home. However, some women expressed their apprehension, and they felt that women should work within the home. This apprehension of waged/salaried women about their work may reflect role conflict; because of the duality of their roles (reproductive and productive) jobs creating problems in looking after their children (Shah 1984; Ferdoos 2005; Khattak 2001). Qureshi (2000) studied the problems of working women in Pakistan and found that more than half of the respondents (54%) faced role conflict problems, and accepted that they were unable to spend more time with children and family members.

Hussain (2008) studied the perception and experience of working women regarding the attitudes of family members, relatives, neighbours, and co-workers in Karachi. She divided women in paid work into three categories according to job ranks and salary; category three was those of career/professional women. Most of the women in this category reported good working conditions with comfortable, air-conditioned rooms, and found their jobs interesting and challenging. It was found that parental support was one of the encouraging factors behind young women's career aspirations and motivations (p. 5). She found that harassment in the workplace, and outside in the street, is a big challenge to women in paid work. Ferdoos (2005), conducting a study on the social status of rural and urban women in paid work in Pakistan, concluded that women-whether working or not- have low status within and outside of the family, and they are also harassed in all walks of life. Shaheed (1989) concludes the most negative attitude toward female employment has been seen among the lower middle class. The major reason could be the greater influence of *pardah* among that class, and their only having access to odd jobs, which are mostly performed by men. Similarly, Ferdoos (2005, p. 76) observes that:

Attitudes toward female employment are quite different in the wealthier and more Westernized upper and upper-middle classes. Particularly, highly educated women like teachers and doctors are needed for keeping up gender segregation, and this demand has had a positive influence on the employment of highly educated women in these fields.

Further, she says these positions- like doctors and teachers- require high competency and a strong educational background; thus, they are associated with higher social status. Interestingly, highly-qualified women, and most from the elite and upper-

middle classes, are predominantly focused in these two professions, and gender segregation is visible in these sectors (Khan 1989).

After having given an overview of social attitudes towards working women, I will be exploring the issues of harassment and gender discrimination in the workplace in the following sections. Since the increase in women's participation in the labour force, the problem of harassment and gender discrimination have been noticed in the workplace.

4.5. Sexual Harassment in the Workplace

There is no single, widely agreed-upon definition of sexual harassment (Brewer and Berk 1982; Tangri, Burt and Johnson 1982; Cleveland and Kerst 1993). Broadly, sexual harassment is behaviour that is uninvited, unwanted and unwelcomed. MacKinnon (1979) (cited in Naveed 1998, p. 9) defines sexual harassment as:

[Referring] to the unwanted imposition of sexual requirements in the context of a relationship of unequal power. Central to the concept is the use of power derived from the social sphere to lever benefits or impose deprivations in another... when one is sexual, the other material, the cumulative sanction is particularly potent.

Similarly, Benson (1984) (cited in Naveed 1998:10) states: 'sexual harassment is broader than sexual coercion...[And] can only be understood as the confluence of authority relations and sexual interests in a society stratified by gender'.

This study employs the definition which is given by the HEC, as it is a regulatory authority of higher-education institutes in Pakistan. The HEC was established under the Higher Education Commission Ordinance 2002 to regulate the Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) in Pakistan. Realizing the problem of harassment in universities or HEIs, the HEC introduced policy guidelines against sexual harassment to address the issue in institutions of higher learning. The policy document clearly defines the types of behaviour that constitute sexual harassment, and the comprehensive mechanism or code of conduct to protect employees from unwanted and uninvited behaviour. The policy document defines sexual harassment thus:

Sexual harassment is offensive sexual behaviour by persons in authority towards those who can be benefited or injured in an official capacity. Therefore, it is primarily an issue of abuse of power, not sex. Sexual harassment is a breach of a trusting relationship that should be a sex-neutral and relaxed situation. It is an unprofessional conduct that undermines the integrity of the employment relationship. Sexual harassment is a coercive behaviour whether implied or

actual. It is unwanted attention and intimacy in a non-reciprocal relationship. It is a violation of professional ethics. (HEC n.d., p. 8).

As women's participation has grown in the formal employment sector, the problem of sexual harassment—either by employer/boss, or colleague—has also become a burning issue and the 'quid pro quo'³³ form of sexual harassment is prominent in almost all public and private institutions in Pakistan (Saeed 2004; Yasin et al 2010). In cases of exploitation and harassment, women often keep it secret and do not complain about the exploiter/abuser due to fear of insult and threat; job insecurity; and family honour, with its links to women's sexuality (Sadrudin 2013, p. 19).

Before 2000, there was no national legislation or code of conduct regarding workplace harassment. In March 2010, 'The Protection against Harassment of Women at Work Place Act 2010' was unanimously passed by the National Assembly, and then by the Senate with a huge majority. Under the Act, all public sector organisations/departments, as well as private sector organisations, are bound to set up an Inquiry Committee consisting of three members (at least one of whom must be a woman). In its second part, the Act also suggests a code of conduct for the protection of women against harassment in the workplace. In addition to this Act, the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act 2009—that is; an amendment to the Pakistan Penal Code, Section 509—was also passed by the National Assembly and the Senate.

4.6. Gender Discrimination in the Workplace

Ridgeway and England (2007) associate gender discrimination with cultural beliefs about men and women, as well as institutionalized policies and practices in workplace organizations, and they regard cultural beliefs about gender as foundational to discrimination against women in the workplace (p. 193). Bobbitt-Zeher (2011) suggests that to build a more comprehensive understanding of gender discrimination, we need to consider discrimination as a process connected to the larger gender system. This means exploring the cultural component of gender ideology; the structural features of sex segregation; formal policies, and the behaviours of institutional actors who apply and enforce such policies in everyday work settings (p. 765).

Past studies in a Pakistani context (Yasin, Chaudhry and Afzal 2010; Shaheen 2004) suggest the prevalence of gender discrimination and harassment at workplaces in

³³ Quid pro quo, a form of sexual harassment, makes actionable what some have called 'sexual blackmail'. That is; an employer or supervisor conditions employment benefits on the employee's submission to unwelcome sexual conduct (Dickinson 1995).

Pakistan. Channar, Abbassi and Ujan (2011), in their research on gender discrimination in the workforce in Sindh, find that females face gender-discriminating behaviour in the workplace, both in public and private organisations. The reason could be male-dominated cultural norms, a lack of public legislation and implementation, and lack of codes of conduct and professionalism in organisations. Kazi (2011), in her study investigating gender discrimination in the public sector organisations, verifies the existence of gender discrimination in this public organisation by quoting one high-level woman officer as saying: ‘yes all this work for women’s empowerment is fine, but still I will say that best place for women is at home and not outside home’. She finds that out of a total 1214 employees, only 101 (8.32%) were women. Of these 101, the majority were in administration sections in RPS-15 or below, because they are employed as assistants, stenographers, and computer operators, with no available career ladder. Secondly, the majority of women 13 and 15 were in RPS-17 and RPS-18 respectively, and all these were project-based temporary posts. Thirdly, women do not reach high-ranking posts, because they are not recruited for permanent positions. Interestingly, women from upper or elite classes have not observed such types of discrimination.

Uzma (2004) suggests that family and society formulate the identity of its members- a two way process, in how people view you and how you view yourself— in different ways, and that difference plays an important role in subjugation and gender discrimination within the family and at work. She finds even educated women have this double identity- professional and private – and that is not valid for the ‘upper’ and ‘advanced’ families, where females are given comparatively more freedom. This double identity of women in paid work and gender discrimination are not simply because of patriarchy and male dominance, but are intersectional of various factors. Complexity and intersectionality behind women’s lower social status or autonomy will be discussed in the analysis chapters.

The next chapter will discuss the research design and methodology employed for this research. Chapter will also present rationale behind the choice of methods and ethical considerations.

Chapter Five: Research Design & Methodology

5.1. Introduction

This chapter addresses the methodology, research design, and method that are employed for data collection. In this chapter, I also discuss the rationale behind the choice of a qualitative approach complemented by the survey for this study, and address the limitations associated with the process of capturing data. The chapter is divided into nine sections: (i) epistemological and ontological stance, (ii) research approach, (iii) research design, sampling and population, (iv) case study as the research strategy, (v) researcher's positionality and reflexivity, (vi) method of data collection, (vii) data analysis and interpretation, (viii) ethical considerations and limitations, and (ix) conclusion to the chapter.

The study seeks to investigate how higher education and economic well-being have contributed to the transformation of the social positions of these female employees within the family in particular, and society in general. Thus, the major research question of the study is: To what extent, and how, have the higher-education and economic well-being of female employees at the UoSJP contributed in providing them access to social mobility, resources and decision-making within the family and workplace, as well as within society more generally? The major research question of the study, and then the sub-questions (given in chapter one), focus on detailed accounts of female employees' experiences. This required a qualitative, as well as a quantitative approach for capturing the lived-through experiences of women, in order to provide an in-depth understanding of the social reality or phenomenon. The survey data adds value to the subjective experiences of female participants captured through face-to face interviews.

The qualitative part of the study focuses on exploring the cause and effects of the existing social structure, and on capturing women's perceptions and experiences from their own perspectives, and as well as the meanings they have afforded their experiences and perceptions regarding their own position in society. I used an interpretative approach for the qualitative part of the study, and collected qualitative data by conducting in-depth, semi-structured interviews. An interpretative paradigm assumes that all human actions are meaningful, but have 'to be interpreted and understood within the context of social practices' (Usher 1996, p.18). Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Lowe (1994) describe an interpretative approach as assuming that 'the world and reality are

not objective and exterior, but...are socially constructed and given meaning by people' (p. 78).

5.2. Epistemological and Ontological Stance

All social research studies begin with a question as to how the researcher understands the social world, and how the researcher's cultural and social assumptions influence their research (Bryman 2004; Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2000; Patton 2002). Heylighen (1993) asserts that epistemology essentially attempts to answer basic questions such as, 'what distinguishes true (adequate) knowledge from false (inadequate) knowledge?'

In order to understand the subjective perceptions and experiences of female employees in higher-education (about their work, respectability, social status and autonomy within the family, the workplace and in society generally), it is vital to be clear how I, as a researcher, interpret reality (social world). It is necessary to question my own already-established assumptions about the nature of knowledge and the world. I, being the part of that social world (research site) as an ex-student (1996-2000), and then as a faculty member (2003 to date), already have some assumptions regarding the research site, and the research participants. For example, I assumed that female employees in higher education enjoy their rights, and have a say in decision-making processes because of their higher-educational qualifications and higher-ranking professions. Secondly, working in higher-education institutes (colleges or universities) is believed to bring respectability to women and the family. In Pakistan, education is regarded as a safe and respectable profession for women- that is why the majority of women belonging to the elite and middle classes prefer to join universities as professionals. Various research studies on women in paid work have also concluded that women in higher-ranking positions and socially accepted occupations (like teachers, doctors, and engineers) have higher social status than those who are in lower-ranking positions (Maqsood et al 2005; Ferdoos 2005).

My assumptions, such as '*female employees in higher education enjoy their rights and have a say in decision-making*', led me to formulate qualitative research questions in the context of the socio-cultural and patriarchal settings of the society (see chapter one). The purpose of this research is not to develop or test (a) theory(ies), but rather aiming to explore and understand the perceptions and experiences of female employees (teaching and non-teaching) at UoSJP regarding their social status and respectability, while

relating to the patriarchy and neo-capital theories. Therefore, the qualitative research is justifiable in order to be able to understand the existing social structure, and in terms of capturing experiential evidence from the perspectives of women occupying these positions. The basic assumption underlying the approach I used is that knowledge is a socially constructed reality, meaning that we need to try and understand complex experiences from participants' viewpoints in order to grasp the realities with which they are dealing (Crotty 1988).

I used interpretative inquiry with the aim of characterising how female employees experience the world, the ways they interact, and the settings in which these interactions take place. To make the qualitative study more comprehensive, I also employed an administered survey (quantitative). Thus, the quantitative part of this research seeks to develop the sociological profile of research participants, and to complement the qualitative research. In applying quantitative approaches, I have employed empirical-analytic inquiry, which sought a metric or categorical description of the phenomenon in ways, which were complementary to, rather than overpowering of, qualitative measures.

5.3. Research Approach

The researcher's choice of research approach is based on paradigms and philosophical assumptions by which s/he designs research questions, and the overall research study, and this is a key formative part of the research process. Newman et al (2003, p. 168) state: 'the research question alone may not produce links to methods unless the question is thought seriously, as well as iteratively, and becomes reflective of purpose'. Choices about research methodology and particular methods are influenced by nature, context, and objectives of the study (Creswell 2005; Robson 2003).

This study seeks to explore the role of higher education and better job positions (economic well-being) in contributing to the transformation of the social status of female employees in higher education, from their own perspective. Thus, the holistic understanding of the existing social structures, which could underestimate/degrade the social status, autonomy and capabilities of these women, and the ability to capture experiential evidence from the perspective of women occupying these positions, required a qualitative (interpretative) approach. This was with the aim of gathering more in-depth information from female employees as they experience the world; the way they interact; and the settings in which these interactions take place. The interpretive paradigm allows for the exploration of social realities, multiple meanings and a deeper

understanding of the impact of phenomena (Bryman 2004; Patton 2002) such as higher-educational qualifications, economic well-being, and socio-cultural structures on the lives of female employees. It is this insight I want to emphasise throughout the study, supported by qualitative data on a more personal level.

In terms of aims and objectives, this study can be described from the perspective of the critical enquiry paradigm, which allows it to be exploratory and descriptive in nature, as well as to gather and deploy quantitative data. Hence, in this study, there are elements of both qualitative and quantitative approaches; the former is the principal approach to this research while the latter works as complementary. The method I applied served the interests of my study; i.e., I collected qualitative data by conducting 40 semi-structured interviews to explore the detailed qualitative accounts of participants' experiences and perceptions in a particular environment about their social status, respectability, autonomy in society. To complement this, I used the structured questionnaire to collect quantitative data from 100 female employees in order to develop a sociological profile of the research participants. Generally, qualitative methodologies tend to reflect the perspective of research participants more fully, and are also concerned with capturing a variety of empirical data (Benz and Newman 1998).

The survey method in this research study complements the findings of the interview data. For example, the key research themes generated from the interviews are complemented with the descriptive data (frequency and percentage) collected through the survey questionnaire.

5.4. Research design, Sampling and Population

The population in question has a key significance in the research study, as it provides the researcher with the data, and results obtained from the data can be generalised. Methodologically speaking, 'population' is defined as an 'aggregate of all cases that conform to some designated set of specification' (Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias 1996, p. 179). The population is a theoretical and hypothetical aggregation of all elements as defined for a given research topic (Babbie 2001). There are 17 Higher Education Commission (HEC)-recognized public universities in the province of Sindh. Due constraints of time and money, and difficulty in obtaining access to all these public universities, only the largest university (in terms of faculties, staff and students), UoSJP, was chosen as the case study for this research. The rationale behind the selection of UoSJP as the case study for this research is outlined below:

- it is the largest university in terms of staff and students in the province of Sindh; currently, a larger number of women are working as academic and non-academic staff;
- they are from the entire province and they have both urban and rural backgrounds, hence, the findings of the study could be generalised to the entire province;
- the detailed accounts and understanding on patriarchy—considered as a key factor behind women’s oppression—can be well-explored, as the majority of female employees belong to interior Sindh (where patriarchy has stronghold); and
- A case study provides in-depth findings of a specific phenomenon.

5.4.2. Sampling and Sample Size

Sampling plays an important role in research, and careful sampling enables validity in research (Cohen and Prusak 2001). The quality of research not only depends upon the suitability of its methodology, but also upon the suitability of the sampling strategy (Morrison 1993). The non-probability sampling design was used to select the sample for this research. As this study employed a mixed-methods approach, I used a multistage sampling procedure (Singh 1991), because it makes use of different sampling techniques at each stage. For example, I used ‘convenience sampling for selecting the respondents for quantitative data (questionnaire), while respondents for the semi-structured interviews were selected by using ‘purposive sampling’. As Cohen and Prusak (2001) say, both sampling techniques are very popular in qualitative research; however; they can also be applied in quantitative research.

A sample is a finite part of a statistical population whose properties are studied to gather information about the whole (Neuman 1997, p. 201). When dealing with people, it can be defined as a set of respondents selected from a larger population for the purpose of a survey (Neuman 1997, p. 201). A good sample is one that possesses the properties of the population from which it is taken. Simply, as a sample represents the population under investigation, it must be chosen carefully, and it must represent the target population of the study.

The sample size is simply the number of people or units available to be studied; however; it should be carefully considered in relation to the population of the research. The major purpose of conducting this research is to be able to make some claims about the larger population; therefore; it is vital to choose a sample that enables us to generalise the research findings to the wider population under investigation. This is a case study, and the sample for this case study required a larger number of participants. Therefore, bearing this in mind, I chose 100 respondents (50 from the academic and 50 from the non-academic group) for the survey questionnaire, while 40 participants (20 from each group) were purposefully selected for in-depth interviews.

5.4.3. Setting of Research Participants

There are two major categories of staff at UoSJP: academic and non-academic (administrative or supportive) staff. I chose both groups for this research, because it enables to include women from different familial, social, regional and socio-economic backgrounds (see profile of research participants in Chapter 6). In so doing, this research explores potential intersecting factors (Crenshaw 1989) which along with gender influence these women's positions in the workplace and in the community. Further, the selection of both groups of women employees for this research allows comparison between these groups as well as within the same group of women, which is important for intersectional research.

Participants were contacted during their working hours and were briefed about the research aims and objectives. After seeking their prior consent for participation in the research, they were asked for a time and venue that suited them. They all were of the opinion that the activity should be conducted in the university, as there are some cultural constraints in meeting elsewhere in the city, or home. Then I, personally- along with a female research assistant (who was a faculty member at UoSJP) - distributed the questionnaire among the participants, and asked them to fill it in. This activity took about 20-30 minutes, and questionnaire was collected back immediately. Being a faculty member, I was aware of patterns and cultural practices/barriers that keep women somehow in isolation, and could make participants feel uncomfortable, or hesitant to share their point of views. I thought the presence of a female research assistant would help to increase the active participation of the women, and they would feel comfortable sharing their points of view. Therefore, I sought the assistance of a female teacher for completing this activity.

Being a teacher at UoSJP, I was cautious about not disrupting the lectures, seminars and other educational activities, as the university tends to disregard activities which interfere with university routines. Therefore, the questionnaire was administered during break time, and scheduled ahead of time with female teachers, while the interviews were conducted during appointment times when participants were free at least for one hour.

5.5. The Case Study as a Research Strategy

The case study as research strategy, method or approach is frequently used in social science disciplines. A case study is a research and evaluation study that focuses on specifics, gives an account of the instances in action, and provides a systematic way of examining events, collecting data, analysing information, and reporting results. The term ‘case study’ may refer to several very different epistemological entities (Mitchell 1983, p.190). Case studies as a research strategy take a small geographical area or a very limited number of individuals as the subjects of the study, and enables researchers to closely examine the data within a specific context. Case studies ‘explore and investigate contemporary real-life phenomenon through detailed contextual analysis of a limited number of events or conditions, and their relationships’ (Zainal 2007, p. 1).

Yin (1984, p. 23) defines the case study research method ‘as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used’. Yin (2009, p. 5) also classifies three forms of case study:

- *Exploratory case study*: ‘aimed at defining the questions and hypotheses of a subsequent (not necessarily case) study’.
- *Descriptive case study*: ‘presents a complete description of a phenomenon within its context’.
- *Explanatory case study*: ‘presents data bearing on cause-effect relationships—explaining which causes produced which effects’.

Other researchers have also given different categories of case studies- such as Stake (1995), who distinguishes three types: the intrinsic, the instrumental and the collective. In an intrinsic case study, the researcher examines the case for its own stake. In an instrumental case study, the researcher selects a small group of subjects in order to examine a certain pattern of behaviour. While in a collective case study, the researcher coordinates data from several different sources (Zainal 2007). McDonough and

McDonough (1997) describe two categories: 'interpretive' and 'evaluative' case studies. In interpretive case studies, researchers interpret the data by developing conceptual categories, and supporting or challenging the assumptions made regarding them (Zainal 2007). In evaluative case studies, researchers try to dissect further by adding their analysis to the phenomena discovered.

There are a number of advantages to case studies. Firstly, in case studies, researchers examine the data collected within the particular context of its use (Yin 1984) - that is; within the situation where the activity takes place. Secondly, the detailed qualitative accounts in case studies not only help to explore data in its real-life environment, but also help to explain the complexities of real life, or situations which may not be captured through surveys or experimental research (Zainal 2007). Thirdly, variations in terms of intrinsic, instrumental and collective approaches to case studies can allow for both quantitative and qualitative analysis of the data. Yin cautions researchers not to confuse case studies with qualitative research: 'case studies can be based entirely on quantitative evidence' (p. 25).

I was also aware of the disadvantages of case studies. Case studies are often accused of a lack of accuracy- as Yin (1984, p.21) points out: 'too many times, the case study investigator has been sloppy, and has allowed equivocal evidence or biased views to influence the direction of the findings and conclusions'. There is also a problem of generalisation with a case study, as it focuses on a small number of subjects in a particular geographical setting. As Yin (1984, p. 21) asks: 'How can you generalise from a single case?' For ensuring control over generalisation in case studies, Hamel, Dufour and Fortin (1993) suggest that parameter establishment and objective setting of the research are far more important than a big sample size.

In this study, my purpose is to investigate the social status of female employees at UoSJP from their own perspectives, and within their own context. Therefore, the instrumental (Stake 1995), the interpretative (McDonough and McDonough 1997) and the explanatory (Yin 2009) case study approach is adopted to explore more detailed real experiences, and the complexities of their real lives in a particular situation. As a quantitative approach cannot capture the subjective lived experiences of subjects (women) in a particular phenomenon, therefore, the qualitative approach is at the core of this study. The generation of experiential knowledge must require a relationship

between researchers and being researched, and that a mutual relationship is being built through qualitative research. The establishment of trustworthy relationships between researcher and informants generates familiarity and mutual personal knowledge, and this is more likely to be achieved by a researcher who is previously known by the informant. My association with the research site (as a faculty member), as well my familiarity with the informants, added value to capturing the real experiences of informants.

Thus, the qualitative approach enabled me to seek rich data from the research participants. In the data analysis process, the text cannot 'relate' with itself alone; the interpreter/researcher is the agent who brings the text 'alive' (Schultz 1994, p. 414). Bearing this in mind, I am aware of the essential subjectivity of observation, and the inevitability of a degree of subjectivity (Talyor 1993) in my research. Although it is also argued that qualitative methods are less structured than quantitative methods, so objectivity, as defined by the positivist tradition, is perhaps never possible with a qualitative approach. There is no separation between knowledge of and meaning of the experience. This is a strong argument for a reflexive approach to the process of qualitative experiences.

5.6. Researcher's Positionality and Reflexivity

The positionality of the researcher has significant implications for the study. Positionality is defined as 'the way in which others position the individual identity and affiliations he/she may have' (Sanghera and Thapar-Bjorkert 2008, p. 553). Feminist scholars consider that a researcher's gender, ethnicity, and social status affect his or her relationship with those being researched (Gilbert 2008). The reflexive approach I used in this research allowed me to reflect on my own positionality and how it both facilitated and complicated the research process. Reflexivity is defined as 'the ability of the researcher to stand outside the research process and critically reflect on that process' (O'Leary 2004, p. 11). Temple and Edwards (2002, pp. 10-11) assert that 'researchers need to reflect on the ways in which they, as individuals with social identities and particular perspectives, have an impact on the interpersonal relations of fieldwork'.

Nightingale and Cromby (1999) described two categories of reflexivity: personal reflexivity and epistemological reflexivity. Personal reflexivity is described as 'self-awareness' (Giddens 1976), 'self-inspection' (Colbourne and Sque 2004) or 'self-reflection' (Carolan 2003). Thus, personal reflexivity requires awareness of the ways in

which the researcher influences research process. In epistemological reflexivity, the researcher asks questions concerning how research questions are defined, what can be found and how can be found. Thus, epistemological reflexivity encourages the researcher to reflect upon the assumptions (about the world, about knowledge) that are made over the course of the research.

Throughout my fieldwork and the data analysis process, four elements of my positionality were significant: being a man interviewing women (gender), being known to interviewees as a colleague (insider), being non-Muslim and interviewing Muslim women (outsider), and being married were particularly relevant and influenced the research process. These elements of my positionality were further complicated by hierarchical power (for example, my status as a faculty member interviewing non-academic research participants), cultural context, and notions of respectability and family honour linked to women's sexuality and modesty.

My positionality as a male researcher studying women had important implications for the study, as men and women have different positionality because they experience life differently (Maynard 1994). Hence, cross-gender interviewing could raise difficulties and complications- as argued by Herod (1993), the gender of researchers can limit the abilities of researchers to locate interviews and gain access to some research sites. Furthermore, in cases of cross-gender interviews, researchers' consciousness about how their presence would be interpreted by others leads to limit their own access to research subjects and fields (McKeganey and Bloor 1991).

This issue of gender-sensitive environments and researchers' unease was relevant to my study- for example, the feelings, thoughts and intimacy of participants related to their marriage experiences. It seemed to be difficult for the research participants in general and the non-academic women in particular, to discuss with me their feelings, thoughts and experiences on topics such as their relationship with their husband, childbirth, and contraception, therefore, at times there were constraints on what I could ask and what they could share with me. With a female researcher, they may have shown more willingness to talk openly regarding their marital relationships. The element of self-consciousness that I noticed during interviews with non-academic participants might not have been present in a female-to-female interview although differences in status of women participants (within participants) and female interviewer could have remained. I,

being a man researching women, was acutely conscious of my class, gender, and privilege. Bearing the issue of self-consciousness and gender sensitivity in mind, I deliberately avoided questions regarding marital relationships and domestic violence, and employed a female research assistant to help conduct the interviews. Hence, such difficulties related to positionality enabled me to strive for knowledge informed by a holistic understanding of gender (Falen 2008).

My positionality as a colleague (insider) had positive as well as negative impacts on my research. I did my post-graduate studies at UoSJP (1996-2000), and since 2003, I have been serving there as a faculty member. Therefore, a shared 'class' status (faculty member) marked me as 'one of them' (Barbara 2005), despite my position as a male researcher. Thus, my position as insider enabled me to access participants, as well as to make participants feel comfortable with taking part in the research and sharing their experiences. Being an 'insider' researcher, I am familiar with the context of social, cultural and academic environments from the perspective of both learner and faculty member, and also shared participants' social world, culture and values. The position of insider is advantageous for research- as Schutz (1976, p.108) notes,

The insider researcher has, as a member of the in-group, access to its past and present histories. S/he is a party to the nuances and idioms within their shared language; the hierarchical position of members within the group is clearly defined.

Generally, it is assumed that participants are not open to outsider researchers. This was not an issue with my research as, being the insider researcher, I personally knew most of the participants, and my position as an insider researcher enabled me to develop 'enhanced rapport' with respondents (Hockey 1993). I was aware of the disadvantages faced by the insider researcher, and knew that my insider position, over-familiarity and being 'taken-for-granted (Hockey 1993) may block access to in-depth information, and may present the picture of insider researcher's partial knowledge. My status as a married male colleague, and belonging to minority— a non-Muslim researching Muslim women—(as an outsider) played an important role in creating a conducive environment for the participants. This is because, culturally, married persons are trusted, and a parallel can be drawn with Hall (2004), who, studying the immigration process for South Asian women entering the UK, suggested that her outsider status as 'white' facilitated access to research cohorts that might not have been accessible if she was an insider. Thirdly, to create a conducive and comfortable environment for research

participants and myself; I sought the assistance of a female teacher for conducting interviews. Furthermore, being a member of the professional community, I shared common feelings, sentiments, and emotions with the professional academic community, and about research site (UoSJP). In this aspect of shared understanding and experiences, the gender dynamics of male privilege were lessened by a shared subjectivity to produce a platform of closeness and trust.

Similarities and differences between researcher and research participants interacted during fieldwork, creating a dynamic state between 'insiderness' and 'outsiderness' (Takeda 2012). Therefore, during fieldwork, I felt that my positionality was constantly changing. Sometimes I considered my position to be that of an insider to the study, and sometimes as an outsider, whose gender, religion and experience are so different that could never entirely understand the women's experiences of powerlessness. My position as an insider (faculty member) and outsider (male belonging to a minority) offered me a unique perspective and pre-existing understanding of both the participants and the context being studied. Furthermore, my position in this study as insider enabled me to build trust with participants, while my position as outsider played an important role in keeping me impartial in my approach to participants' real experiences.

Apart from the significance of gender, class, and marital status in my fieldwork, the issue of culture, language, national and ethnic identity require consideration. Storrs (2000) argues that hierarchical power relations exist between interviewees who are interviewed in their non-native language, and a researcher who uses his/her native language. Storrs' views validate the significance of the researcher and research participants sharing a common language, cultural and ethnic and national backgrounds. The participants of this study and I shared common languages (Sindhi and Urdu), and common cultural and ethnic backgrounds. This type of affinity became a means of producing a positive rapport with research participants, as I conducted interviews in our native and national languages (Sindhi and Urdu). Through doing this research, I came to realize that research topics are an influential factor in the research process. My positionality as Sindhi-Pakistani man conducting research on women's autonomy and independence in a male dominated society symbolically allocated negative attributes to me that impacted on the interview process. For example, non-academic participants were reluctant to share information about their intimate relationships and gender based violence within their households, and some of them straight away refused to give an

interview. However, our shared language and cultural values contributed positively to reducing such barriers to some extent and made the interview process relatively smooth.

Besides the impact of cultural context, the notions of respectability and family honour, which are linked to women's sexuality and modesty (Sathar and Kazi 2000), were also significant. In Sindhi culture, sharing household matters with non-family members is considered as shameful. In such an environment, I was anxious about my own presence in the interviews and the discussion of topics, which are usually not discussed by a man with a woman and vice versa. Thus, the element of respectability negatively impacted on my research and limited my ability to explore and gather more in-depth experiences of women regarding their marital relationships and gender based violence within their households. Even though a female colleague helped with conducting the interviews, I believe that due to my presence there were certain experiences that research participants did not share that they might have shared with female-only- interviewers.

5.7. Research Procedure: Gaining Entry to UoSJP

After getting permission from the ethical review committee, University of Sussex, via the officially prescribed format, I proceeded to make my way to Pakistan for fieldwork. I arranged a meeting with the Registrar of UoSJP, and briefed him regarding my research study. I also submitted a written request for permission to collect data (See Appendix A) that provided the purpose of the study, and the type of instruments to be administered. All contact letters were in the English language, as it is the official language of Pakistan, and also compulsory for official corresponding. After getting formal approval from the Registrar, I arranged meetings with the Dean of Advanced Studies for their official permission. Afterwards, I had meetings with heads of departments, briefed them about my research study, and got the list of female employees in their departments. Participants were informed about the purpose of the research study, and I sought their written consent to take part in the study. They were also informed that they could withdraw at any stage of the research if they so wanted.

5.8. Method of Data Collection

5.8.1. Initial Research Design for Data Collection

The purpose of the initial research design was to ensure that the instruments to be used in actual research design were capable of gathering the rich information on the research topic. In this phase, instruments of data collection were pre-tested and tested; thus; the process of initial research design helped to develop suitable, capable and comprehensive

instruments (questionnaire and interviews) for data collection. The following steps were taken to develop the instruments for data collection:

5.8.1.1. Review of Documents

Official documents such as recruitment policy, gender policy, and annual progress reports are a good source of secondary data, both qualitative and quantitative. Official and physical documents are a good source for examining the past and current socio-economic conditions of women in general, and the socio-economic conditions of female employees in particular. Reviewing public documents such as recruitment policies, gender policies, development plans, annual progress reports, statistical reports, and reports on the status of women from the Ministry of Women helped me to understand the broader perspective of the participants, and also helped in the development of a comprehensive questionnaire for primary data collection. For this study, mostly official documents- regarding policies for the development of women, legislation for women in general and women workers in particular, and policies referring to the current status of female employees- were studied. Furthermore, documents helped to understand the law, policies and other initiatives taken by the government for the well-being of working women within the workplace, and more generally in the society. The main purpose of studying these documents was to develop the research instruments- i.e. structured questionnaire and semi-structured interviewing- for gathering the actual primary data for the research study.

5.8.1.2. Piloting the research instruments

Cohen and Prusak (2001) and Bryman (2001) suggest that it is vital to undertake a pilot research before conducting the actual study, as pilot research helps to ensure that the instruments developed function well. Bearing this in mind, I undertook a pilot study before embarking upon the larger study. Thus, the pilot study helped in eliminating ambiguities in words, identifying misunderstood items and leading questions, and increasing the relevancy and validity of the research tools. I anticipated covering the maximum number of my population under investigation for ensuring validity and reliability; therefore; I needed such instruments that would be more accurate and easy to administer to a larger group.

While going through the literature on research methods and research instruments, I decided that applying a questionnaire for collecting the substantive quantitative data needed for this study would be the best approach, while semi-structured interviews

appeared to be the best approach for the qualitative aspects of my research study. I also sought feedback on my questionnaire from three female Pakistani PhD researchers at the University of Sussex. They were asked to fill in the questionnaire and comment on:

- ☐ Improving the questionnaire;
- ☐ Whether items in the questionnaire were able to explore female employees' perceptions and experience about their social status; and
- ☐ Whether questionnaire items were clear and precise.

Pilot study: The pilot study was conducted in September 2012 at UoSJP. This pilot study was conducted with only one group (women teachers) because, later on, the second group of women (non-teaching staff) was included in the light of feedback from participants of the pilot study, and supervisors' advice/suggestions. Therefore, the questionnaires developed were distributed to 20 female teachers of the faculty of Social Sciences for the purpose of further modification and improvement in the designed research questionnaire. At first, there were five sections of the questionnaire, which were reduced to three. Some leading and/or loaded questions, which somehow made the participants upset were omitted such as questions regarding religion and culture. Many suggestions, which I collected throughout the piloting stage, were incorporated into the questionnaire to make it more comprehensive, clear and concise. Having done the piloting phase of the study, I made a number of adjustments and modifications before proceeding with the main study.

5.8.2. Actual Research Design for Data Collection

5.8.2.1. The Structured Questionnaire

The Questionnaire is the most appropriate technique for collecting quantitative data; however, it could also be used for qualitative data collection. Most questions can be classified in either of two general categories: factual questions and subjective experience questions (Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias 1996). The most common type of factual questions are background questions or personal information questions, which help to develop a picture of the background (e.g. gender, age, marital status, education, income and family etc.) of the respondent. Questions about subjective experiences include the respondent's attitudes, feelings and opinions regarding their profession and workplace (Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias 1996). For this study, the questionnaire included both above discussed type of questions.

There are two major types of questionnaire: unstructured/open-ended and structured/close-ended. In the first type of questionnaire, the researcher gives free rein to respondents in responding to the questions asked. It is the respondents themselves who fill out the questionnaire, in any way he or she chooses. By contrast, in the second type of questionnaire, respondents are bound to select the answer to the question already given by the researcher. As Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias 1996 (1996) write: 'respondents are given a set of responses, and asked to choose closely [to] describe to their attributes or attitude' (p. 257). It is very important when constructing the questionnaire to conduct pilot-tests of all questions included and of the overall format (Johnson and Turner 2003). A five-point rating scale (Likert 1932) structured questionnaire was distributed, and was completed by 100 participants (50 from each group). The rationale behind the choice of Likert-type scale format was 'user-friendliness' (Likert 1932), meaning that it is more simple- unlike the numerical categories choices, which often make the respondent unclear and confused. The questionnaire was largely quantitative (Appendix E) and divided into two parts. In the first part of the questionnaire, personal information, a multi-category scaled item, was employed to develop the profile of the participants. In the second part of the questionnaire, a Likert-type scale format was used to seek the most appropriate answer for questions. The participants of the study were selected through non-probability convenience sampling.

5.8.2.2. *Semi-structured Interviewing*

Semi-structured interview-based design, which directly focused my research questions, was used to collect detailed qualitative information. After collecting the quantitative data through the structured questionnaire for developing the socio-economic profile of the participants of the study, the second phase of data collection was collecting qualitative data. For this purpose, a semi-structured interviewing schedule was designed in the light of the quantitative data already collected through the structured questionnaire. The semi-structured interviewing technique, widely used in sociology, is based on an interview guide, open-ended questions, and informal probing to facilitate a discussion of issues in a semi-structured or unstructured manner (Devine 1995, p.138).

Using the semi-structured interview technique, I was aware of its challenges. It is time-consuming and costly (Bryman 2001) as it requires preparing for each interview, then

conducting interviews, recording each interview, transcribing each recorded interview, and finally analysing data derived from the interviews.

Purposive sampling, which is a non-probability technique of sampling, was applied in selecting the respondents of this study. Dane (1990) points out that the advantage of purposive sampling is that it allows the researcher to deliberate on people or events. 40 interviews (20 from each group) were conducted through purposive sampling. I carried out face-to-face interviews and recorded them (with prior informed consent of the respondents) (Appendix D).

Through semi-structured interviews and discussions with participants, I have tried to explore with them the origins of their roles; their choice of occupations in light of their experiences at work in the context of the moral structure through which they frame their personal journey. How do they view their current social status within the workplace and family, and to what extent they are satisfied with their current role and status? How do they perceive societal attitudes towards their social status and professions?

5.9. Data Analysis and Interpretation

5.9.1. Qualitative (Interview) Data Analysis

Principally, my research is qualitative, while the quantitative part of the research works as complementary to the qualitative data. Therefore, I tried to obtain rich and diverse information through face-to-face in-depth interviews with a reasonable number of respondents. The qualitative data, collected through conducting semi-structured interviews, was organised by using the NVivo 9, a qualitative data analysis (QDA) computer-software package produced by QSR International. NVivo has been designed for qualitative researchers working with very rich text-based and/or multimedia information, where deep levels of analysis on small or large volumes of data are required. Qualitative data analysis requires a process of reduction to manage and classify data. In this process, units of text are first de-contextualised and then re-contextualised (Jones 2007). NVivo software helps in the process of reduction, by managing and organising the qualitative data. Further, NVivo helps in organising raw data (interviews, observation and field notes, etc.) and also links them with memos—where a researcher take codes, and analytical notes, which are very helpful in editing and reworking ideas as the project progresses (Walsh 2003). Further, it helps to import documents directly from word processing packages, and code these on-screen.

5.9.2. Quantitative Data Analysis

The primary focus of this research is on the qualitative approach, as it provides an in-depth understanding of participants' experiences and multiple identities. However, the quantitative part of this research helps in developing the profile of participants and complementing the qualitative data by providing percentages and frequencies against the statements asked, via the structured questionnaire. The quantitative data, which I collected from respondents through the structured questionnaire, were compiled and analysed by using the Statistical Programme for Social Science (SPSS). SPSS helps in organising the data, and it is easier to analyse data in this way than through MS Excel or other software. Further, it also saves times for researchers, and the researcher may quickly reflect on his data once it is organised in SPSS software. SPSS outputs were presented in tabular form, with explanations of their implications. Data in the first part of the questionnaire was elicited to present a description of the sample- i.e. name, age, sex, marital status, family, education, income, and experience are analysed in terms of frequencies (f), and percentage (%). Thus, questions in this part of questionnaire helped to gather background information and develop a profile of the respondents. The actual data of the questionnaire was presented in descriptive statistics in support of the qualitative research.

5.10. Ethical Considerations

It is essential for researchers to conduct their research in an ethically responsible manner (Robson 2003). Ethics refers to rules of conduct; conformity to a code or set of principles (Creswell 2005). These rules of conduct or ethical guidelines applied in research ensure avoiding any possible error that could have harmful effects on the research and research participants. Thus, my research study also required that the issues in this research that might be harmful to the participants of the study should be properly addressed in the light of ethical guidelines. The participants of this research study were female employees in higher education.

Participants of any research have certain rights, such as the 'right to information'- to know the purpose of this study, the use of its findings, and any consequences the study would have on their lives (Creswell 2005). In addition, they have right to refuse to participate or withdraw at any stage of the study. It is the responsibility of the researcher that s/he should protect the anonymity of participants when they are providing information. My study did focus on some sensitive aspects, which could make

participants upset while sharing their experiences and challenges they were facing. Thus, there was a risk attached to asking them to reflect on any role conflict and difficult experiences they might have undergone. I, completely agreeing with and recognizing the rights of participants (Creswell 2005), and overcoming the issue of vulnerability, informed participants about the major purpose of the research and the further usage of the study. I also assured them that their shared experiences and information would be kept confidential, and would only be used for this study. Being an insider (faculty member and ex-student), I was well aware about the participants and research site, and was conscientious in ensuring female employees were very much aware that their participation was entirely voluntary. I also informed participants about the right to information by providing them with a participant information sheet (Appendix C) and a consent form for seeking their prior permission (Appendix B). Blaxter, Hughes and Tight (1996, p.146) claim that:

Ethical research involves getting informed consent of those you are going to interview, question, observe or take materials from. It involves reaching agreement about the use of this data, and how its analysis will be reported and disseminated. And it is about keeping to such agreements when they have been reached.

In this study, I obtained participants' consent on the prescribed format, and provided enough information regarding the research, so that participants could be well aware of their involvement in the research. Participants were advised that they could withdraw from the study at any point if they felt any risk or threat. Keeping this procedure clearer, and respecting the research site- as Creswell (2005) mentions that it is important to respect of site where research takes place- I arranged meetings with authorities and sought official written permission from the university's authorities i.e. the Registrar (Appendix A). This approach reflected my concerns about participants' rights to information and privacy.

I, being a male researcher studying the experiences and perceptions of female employees, was aware of some sensitive psychological issues such as emotional upset that could be raised during interviews. Empathy, sensitivity and concern for research participants are key ethical issues in the research process. Muzvidziwa (2004) suggests 'ethical caring' is the foundation on which trust between the researcher and research participants is built during the course of research. Bourdillon (1997), emphasizing the behaviour of the researcher with their research participants, observed: 'in deciding what

is appropriate research behaviour, we need to consider ...what is required for us by the societies that support us' (p.157). Bearing this in mind, I took female participants seriously and established a 'good rapport' (Duncombe and Jessop 2002) that made participants feel sufficiently comfortable. Muzvidziwa (2004) suggests that taking research participants seriously is a prerequisite to success, whether one is a male or a female researcher. Secondly, my research participants (university-educated professionals) themselves read the consent form and brief summary of my research project, which helped a lot in establishing good rapport and trust between me and my research participants. Being part of the research community (as a colleague), I was fully aware of the socio-cultural constraints which females may face; therefore, by abiding by the ethical codes of participants' socio-cultural norms, I sought the assistance of a female teacher for conducting interviews.

Moreover, I used code numbers, rather than participants' names, on records that contained sensitive information, to help protect confidentiality. I also informed research participants that they could read the transcription of their interview if they wanted, and ensured them that all of their data would be treated confidentially. In this way, I gained their trust as a researcher.

5.11. Conclusion

Chapter five has outlined the research design and method of data collection, including my philosophical (ontological and epistemological) assumptions, my positionality as a researcher, and the choice of a mixed-methods approach. The rationale behind the choice of a mixed-methods approach, and my decision to use case study as the research strategy/method have also been discussed in this chapter. Further, the chapter discussed the strategy approach to data collection, organisation and analysis. The chapter also discussed the sampling strategy, and the characteristics of participants. Finally, the chapter also sheds light on the ethical issues.

In the next chapter, I will present the organisation of interview and survey data, and a sociological profile of the research participants.

Chapter Six: Sociological Profile of the Research Participants

6.1. Introduction

This chapter aims at presenting a systematic organisation of both the qualitative and quantitative data, and developing a sociological profile of the participants. Thus, the chapter has two sections: (i) presents the organisation of questionnaire and interview data; and (ii) presents the detailed profile of the survey respondents and interviewees. The detailed profile of the research participants consists of a type of family, the ethnicity of participants, the average age of participants, the marital status of participants, the qualifications of participants, the monthly income of participants, and the professional experience of research participants.

6.2. Data Organisation and Presentation

A mixed-methods approach is employed for this research; therefore, two instruments (semi-structured, in-depth interviews and a structured questionnaire) were used. A brief summary of the questionnaire and interviews data is given in the following sub-sections.

6.2.1. The Questionnaire Data

The questionnaire consists of two parts. The first part of the questionnaire aimed at developing the personal profile of the participants. In this section, participants were asked to choose the most appropriate option against each given statement. There were eight different statements regarding the participants' family, age group, marital status, number of children, educational qualifications, current professional position, monthly income, and years of working experience. The second part of the structured questionnaire was about the substantive area of research (Appendix E). Table: 2 shows the detailed distribution of the respondents by their professional position/grade.

Table 2: Distribution of the respondents by their professional position

Survey Participants	Professional Position	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative percentage
Academic	Professor	05	05	05
	Associate Professor	09	09	14
	Assistant Professor	16	16	30
	Lecturer	20	20	50
Non-academic	Computer programmer	10	10	60
	Librarian	03	03	63
	Computer Operator/Clerk	21	21	84
	Laboratory/Library Assistant	16	16	100
	Total	100	100	

Source: Own field work from August-October 2013

6.2.2. Interviews Data

The aims of conducting in-depth interviews are: firstly; to determine the perception and experience of participants about their profession and workplace environment. How do they perceive their social status and respectability, being professional middle-class women, in the family and in society in general? This is to determine whether higher-education and professional status have brought changes in the participants' status within the family and society. Secondly, to determine whether higher education and profession (employment) are the significant determinants of having control over resources/income and life, and of decision-making capabilities within the family, the workplace, in the community, and society more generally. Thirdly, whether socio-cultural factors have played a role as determinants of women's lower participation in employment, and in decision-making processes at family, workplace and community level. Fourthly, whether female employees at UoSJP have faced attitudinal problems based on gender within the family, at the workplace and in the community. The following table shows the age, ethnicity and professional position of the participants

Table 3: Interinterviewees' distribution by their age, ethnicity and professional position

Pseudonyms	Age (yrs)	Ethnicity	Position	Pseudonyms	Age (yrs)	Ethnicity	Position
Kate	55	Sindhi	Assoc. P	Alana	40	Sindhi	CP
Chelsea	45	US	Assoc. P	Alice	38	Sindhi	CP
Cathy	47	Sindhi	Assoc. P	Amanda	35	Sindhi	LA
Charlotte	45	Sindhi	AP	Amelia	28	Sindhi	JC
Barbra	52	Sindhi	Assoc. P	Angela	40	Sindhi	JC
Camilla	45	Sindhi	Professor	Ashley	45	Sindhi	CP
Caroline	42	Sindhi	AP	Lora	55	Sindhi	DO
Christina	45	Sindhi	AP	Lisa	36	Sindhi	CO
Diana	35	Sindhi	AP	Agnes	35	Sindhi	LA
Donna	36	US	AP	Adele	40	Sindhi	C
Emily	42	Sindhi	Assoc. P	Lucy	30	Sindhi	LA
Emma	48	Sindhi	Professor	Miranda	38	Sindhi	LA
Florence	45	Sindhi	Assoc. P	Nicola	30	Sindhi	Librarian
Grace	45	Sindhi	AP	Pamela	35	Sindhi	CP
Isabella	43	US	AP	Nancy	28	Sindhi	LA
Jennifer	40	Sindhi	AP	Paula	30	Sindhi	A
Jenny	36	Sindhi	AP	Sandra	30	Sindhi	LA
Jessica	50	Sindhi	Professor	Shirley	36	Sindhi	LA
Juliet	52	US	Professor	Susan	42	Sindhi	A
Justine	45	Sindhi	Assoc. P	Petra	35	US	A

Source: Own field work from August-October 2013

6.3. Profile of the Research Participants

6.3.1. Type of Family of the Research Participants

In Sindh, the ‘joint’ family is dominant; however, the notion of nuclear or semi-nuclear family exists in urban areas. Extended or joint family is the traditional patriarchal family system, which consists of two or more generations (Waseem et al 2008). Mostly, the family patriarch directs all affairs, protects family interests, and exacts complete obedience from its members as a religious and ethical obligation (Isran and Isran 2012; Ali et al 2011). The nuclear family is the product of industrialisation and urbanisation. The nuclear family consists of a married man and woman with their offspring, although in some cases one or more additional persons- such as younger brothers, sisters, and nephews- may reside with them (also known as ‘supplementary nuclear family’) (Waseem et al 2008, p. 30). One or two additional persons are commonly seen in Punjabi, Pathan, Baloch and Sindhi ethnic nuclear families based in urban areas, as they have come to the cities for their education and livelihood purposes.

The majority of survey respondents (61%) belonged to a joint family, while 39 per cent were from nuclear or semi-nuclear families. The majority of academic respondents were from nuclear or semi-nuclear families, while the majority of non-academic respondents were from extended families. This shows that family patterns are changing in Sindh. In Pakistan as a whole, however, the traditional family system is still dominant. This is a vivid indication of the rise of class systems in Sindh, Pakistan, which have brought about changes in family structure. It was observed that the majority of the married interviewees (13 out of 15) had a nuclear family, and all unmarried participants were living in joint families with their parents. Secondly, the most important trend the data revealed is the difference between the family systems of both groups. This is a manifestation of different family patterns in different classes based on socio-economic well-being, and it indicates the acceptance of nuclear or semi-nuclear family systems in the upper-middle and middle class in Sindh. Table: 5 shows the distribution of survey and interview participants by family type.

Table 4: Distribution of research participants by type of family

Research Participants	Type of Family				Total	
	Joint family		Nuclear Family			
	Freq.	Per cent	Freq.	Per cent	Freq.	Per cent
Survey	61	61	39	39	100	100
Interview	21	52.5	19	47.5	40	100

Source: Own field work from August-October 2013

6.3.2. Ethnicity of the Research Participants

The province of Sindh has a rich cultural diversity, and the five major ethnic groups are Sindhi (59.73%), Urdu-speaking (21%), Punjabi (6.99%), Pathan (4.19%) and Baloch (2.11%) (PCO 1998). The majority of the Sindhi are settled in rural areas, and depend on agriculture and livestock. By contrast, Urdu-speaking migrants are centred in the big cities like Karachi, Hyderabad, Mirpurkhas and Sukkur, and are engaged in the business, industries and service sectors. Therefore, the language, culture, and family patterns of both these ethnic groups are very different. The majority of the interviewees (34) of the research were Sindhi, while only five academic and one non-academic interviewees were Urdu-speaking migrants. The following table shows the distribution of research participants by their mother tongue.

Table 5: Frequency distribution of interviewees by their mother tongue

Research participants	Sindhi		Urdu-speaking		Total	
	Freq.	Per cent	Freq.	Per cent	Freq.	Per cent
Academic	15	75	05	25	20	100
Non-Academic	19	95	01	5	20	100
Total	34	85	6	15	40	100

Source: Own field work from August-October 2013

6.3.3. Age Category of the Research Participants

Respondents of the survey were divided into five categories of age groups. The majority of academic and non-academic participants were of under the age of 35 years. Only 9 per cent of respondents being 55 or older clearly indicates that the employment trend at UoSJP has changed significantly in the last decade and a half, and during that period a greater number of women have entered to the university in academic and non-academic

categories. The following table shows the frequency and percentage distribution of survey respondents according to their age category/group.

Table 6: Distribution of survey participants by age category

Age Category	Survey Participants		Cumulative	
	Freq.	Per cent	Freq.	Per cent
Under 24 years	12	12	12	12
25-34 years	49	49	61	61
35 -44 years	24	24	85	85
45-54 years	11	11	96	96
55 and above	4	4	100	100
Total	100	100		

Source: Own field work from August-October 2013

The average age of academic interviewees was 44 years, while 36 years was the average for non-academic interviewees. The lowest age of academic interviewees was 35 years, and the highest 55, while in the non-academic category the lowest age was 28, and the highest 55 years. The majority of the academic interviewees- thirteen out of twenty (65%) - were in their forties, while the majority of non-academic interviewees twelve out of twenty (60%) - were in their thirties.

6.3.4. Marital Status of the Research Participants

In Pakistani society, marriage is regarded as obligatory for young men and women, and consanguineous³⁴ marriages are common (Khan, Sultana and Siraj 2011). Historically, the family had been responsible for arranging the marriage of young family members, and endogamous marriage norms—first-cousin marriages; *watta-satta* (‘exchange’ marriages)—were practiced in the society (Ahmad 1976; Shaw 2000). However, with the passage of time, industrialisation and the resultant urbanisation have brought about changes in family patterns. Now, the urban-based middle class has shifted its preference for marriage from the same family and caste to similar upbringing, class, socio-cultural and educational backgrounds. Table: 8 shows the marital status distribution of survey respondents and interviewees.

³⁴ Consanguineous marriages are divided into two types: One is parallel-cousin marriage, in which a person marries their father’s brother’s daughter, or mother’s sister’s daughter. The second type, cross-cousin marriage, means a person marries his father’s sister’s daughter or his mother’s brother’s daughter.

Table 7: Distribution of the research participants by their marital status

Research participants	Survey Respondents		Interviewees		Total	
	Freq.	Per cent	Freq.	Per cent	Freq.	Per cent
Never married	31	31	21	52.5	52	37
Married	65	65	17	40.5	82	58.5
Widow	03	03	01	2.5	04	3
Separated	01	01	01	2.5	02	1.5
Total	100	100	40	100	140	100

Source: Own field work from August-October 2013

6.4.5. Level of Education of the Research Participants

The minimum required qualification for the university faculty (Lecturer) is post-graduation, and M.Phil/PhD is a pre-requisite for further promotion to higher-ranking positions like Assistant Professor, Associate Professor and Professor. Therefore, all the academic respondents were either post-graduates, or held an M.Phil./PhD. By contrast, none of the non-academic survey participants/interviewees have a PhD, as it is not required for their inter-career development and promotion, however; the majority of non-academic respondents held post-graduate qualifications. The following table shows the distribution of research participants by their level of education/qualification.

Table 8: Distribution of the research participants by level of education

Level of Education	Survey Respondents		Interviewees	
	Freq.	Per cent	Freq.	Per cent
Graduate	11	11	25	62.5
Masters	62	62	04	10
M.Phil	8	8	00	00
PhD	19	19	10	27.5
Total	100	100	40	100

Source: Own field work from August-October 2013

6.4.6. Economic Position of the Research Participants

Participants were divided into six categories according to their monthly income: the lowest category of income was under Rs. 20,000 (Pak. Rupees)³⁵, while the highest was above Rs 100,000. In Pakistan, public sector employment is considered better than that

³⁵ In Great British Pounds, £137.85 (at the current conversion rate £1=145.08 Pak rupees, dated April 10, 2016).

of the private sector as it is flexible and secure, and the wages in the public sector are far better than those in the private sector (Hyder 2002). As per Labour Policy 2013, minimum monthly wages are Rs. 10,000. In the public sector, there is a ‘Revised Pay Scale’ system, and wages are uniform. As per the Revised Basic Pay Scales 2011, the basic pay for the RPS-1 is Rs: 4,800, and Rs 43,000 for the RPS-22. This RPS policy is compulsory for all public departments/institutions, including public universities. However, besides this, there is a system of ‘allowances and benefits’ that varies from department to department, and position. Generally, benefits and allowances are more attractive in public departments such as Pakistan Telecommunication, Water and Power Authority, Civil Aviation, Revenue Department, and universities, while poor benefits and allowances are seen in the health and education sectors (except universities). Comparatively, university employees- both academic and non-academic- are given attractive salary packages. The following table shows the monthly income of the research participants.

Table 9: Distribution of participants by monthly income

In Pak Rupees (000)	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative percent
Under 20	29	29	29
21-40	20	20	49
41-60	13	13	62
61-80	21	21	83
81-100	6	6	89
Above 100	11	11	100
Total	100	100	

Source: Own field work from August-October 2013

6.6.7. Work Experience of the Research participants

Since 2000, women’s participation in the labour force has increased. A similar trend has been reported at the University of Sindh, as 65 per cent of survey respondents have fewer than 10 years of work experience. The following table shows the distribution of survey respondents and interviewees according to years of work experience at the University of Sindh.

Table 10: Distribution of the research participants by years of work experience

Level of Education	Survey Respondents		Interviewees	
	Freq.	Per cent	Freq.	Per cent
0-4 year	29	29	06	15
5-9 year	36	36	13	32.5
10 -14 year	18	18	16	40
15-19 year	08	08	02	5
20 year and above	09	90	03	7.5
Total	100	100	40	100

Source: Own field work from August-October 2013

6.4. Conclusion

This chapter has developed the sociological profile of interviewees and survey participants. Data reveals that the majority of the research participants were living in joint family households; however, a sufficient number of academic and non-academic staff were also living in nuclear or semi-nuclear families. This shows the change in the family norms of Sindhi families living in the urban areas.

The next three chapters present the analysis and discussion on the reported findings of interviews (qualitative) while corresponding the survey findings (quantitative). In the next chapter, I shall discuss the perceptions and experiences of the research participants regarding their profession, and their respectability in the workplace.

Chapter Seven: Experiences of Profession & Respectability in the Workplace

7.1. Introduction

This chapter aims to explore the experiences of the research participants regarding their professions and workplace environments, and to analyse the perceptions of professional women regarding their respectability in the workplace. Further, it explores the link between education as the most suitable profession for women in Pakistan, and respectability of female employees in the workplace. Thus, two major themes emerged from the semi-structured in-depth interviews: (i) perceptions of profession and respectability in the workplace, and (ii) perceptions regarding workplace environment. These two major themes are explored, analysed and discussed in the light of Bourdieu's concept of capitals (economic, cultural, social and symbolic), and a combination of standpoint and intersectionality theories.

A significant standpoint for the analysis of the perceptions and experiences of the participants is based on past studies on women in paid work in Pakistan (Khattak 2014; Ferdoos 2006; Maqsood et al 2005) which have argued that teaching, like medicine, is the most favoured and culturally suitable profession for women in Pakistani society. Furthermore, they argued that this profession is not merely beneficial for women in managing both professional and domestic responsibilities but, importantly, it escalates the social status and respectability of women in the workplace, family and society in general. This chapter has two key contributions. Firstly, identification of attitudes/tendencies amongst female participants to choose teaching as a career, and established socio-cultural foundations that teaching (education) as a career for women increased their respectability in the workplace and social status in the community. Here, 'attitude' refers to the individual's beliefs and behavioural assumptions, which influence individual preferences and choices in a certain socio-cultural environment. For example, men in Pakistan 'prefer' to be engineers, while women 'prefer' to be doctors and teachers.

Secondly, this chapter presents both qualitative and quantitative evidence that shows the concerns of academic and non-academic participants regarding the workplace environment and the attitudes they encounter as 'women' instead of as professional colleagues. Here, the term 'woman' refers to the participants' gendered identities.

The discussion of the key findings of this chapter starts in section 7.2, with how academic and non-academic participants have perceived their profession, and how their profession has contributed to an elevation in their respectability in the workplace. This section has been further divided into five sub-sections, which discuss the feminisation of the teaching profession in Pakistan (Sindh). How do they perceive the public image of their profession in the society? Is their profession seen as an ideal for women in developing societies like Pakistan? How far they are satisfied with the nature of their job, and do they receive recognition of their professional position in families, and in society in general? Further, the section also presents an account of participants' experiences and perceptions of their social status and respectability in the workplace.

Section 7.3 presents an account of academic and non-academic participants' experience about the workplace environment. This major theme of the chapter also has five sub-themes, which discuss how these academic and non-academic female employees see the workplace environment- i.e., the approach or attitude of university management towards female employees; the attitude of their immediate bosses or male colleagues; gender discrimination; nepotism/favouritism; and harassment or sexist behaviours. Further, the strategies employed or initiatives made by female employees in handling inappropriate attitudes or the sexist behaviour of colleagues in the workplace are discussed in detail. Section 7.4 concludes this chapter by presenting the key findings.

7.2. Perception regarding Profession and Social Status

The following sections of the chapter focus on the perceptions of research participants regarding their profession and social status. The major question to be addressed in the following section are: How do women perceive their profession? How do women experience working environment? Do women's professions elevate their respectability in the workplace? How do women perceive and experience societal attitudes towards their work?

7.2.1. Teaching as a Feminised Profession

Globally, teaching has been assumed the most suitable profession for women, and the 'feminisation' of this profession has been noted for decades (Drudy 2008). The term 'feminisation' has mostly been debated statistically, and means an occupation in which women are predominant is said to be 'feminised' (Bank 2007). However, sociologists and educationists refer the term 'feminisation' to labour market tendencies, where the participation of women in various occupations is increasing (Drudy 2008). Here, the

term ‘feminisation’ has been used in both the above-mentioned contexts. In Pakistan, many women enter the teaching profession, and 77.75 per cent of primary teachers are females, while female participation in teacher training institutions is very high (80-90%) as compared to male participation (10-20 %) (Akhtar 2012, p. 263; Khattak 2014, p. 50). At the tertiary level, women’s participation is increasing; about 30 percent of faculty members in universities are women (FBS 2011).

The majority of the interviewees (34) perceived teaching as a feminine profession that not only is more secure and flexible compared to other professions in Sindh, but also authorises a distinctive identity as ‘teacher’. As the result of that distinctive identity, they gain a sense of ‘selfness and confidence’, and further, they gain social status and social recognition as women in a broader socio-cultural context, as one of the academic participants illustrates:

To me, teaching is a feminine profession, and the best option for women, as this profession brings respect to a woman. I, being a university teacher, have earned an identity and recognition. I heard saying people ‘Kate is a professor’...this kind of appreciation makes me happy, and I feel proud of myself to be a teacher. (Kate, 55, Professor)

Kate perceived education as a ‘feminine’ and ‘feminised’ profession, both statistically at primary and secondary school level, and sociologically at tertiary level. Teaching or working within an educational institution is not merely flexible in terms of working hours and work pressure on women, but they are also able to gain social status and respectability by adopting this profession as a career (alongside its monetary benefits). The profession has given the identity (and the recognition that comes with it) of ‘Professor’ to Kate, which has increased her sense of social status and respectability in the workplace and society.

7.2.2. Teaching Profession: An Ideal for Women

The majority of academic and non-academic survey respondents (88 per cent and 84 per cent respectively) agreed that education (teaching) as a profession is an ideal for women in Sindhi society. Similarly, a majority of academic and non-academic interviewees perceived that education as a profession is an ideal, and the most suitable for women in Sindhi context. They wanted to see their sisters or daughters in this profession as well. Similar findings were reported by Osella and Osella (2000, p.45) in the Indian state of Kerala, in which a working housewife wanted to see her daughter as a school teacher because it is a good profession for women (respectable; decent hours; you can work

near home; holidays when your children have them). One of the major reasons behind this perception was a good public image and the widely socio-cultural and religious acceptance of this profession in Sindhi society. This profession is considered worthy; one that is acceptable for women, and one in which the working environment is relatively safe for them (Kirk 2004). Pakistani [Sindhi] society, which is still more traditional (though a class system has been emerging), perceives the education profession as a 'feminine' one (like medicine), and it contributes to the social status and dignity of women, as well as increasing the SES of the family in society, as one of the academic interviewees illustrates below:

I wanted to be a teacher and thanks to God I am. [the]Public image of teaching profession is good, and people respect teachers a lot. I think education is the most suitable profession for women, and they should join this profession as it not only gives them a monetary advantage, but also increases their social status and respectability in family and society. (Charlotte, 45, AP)

Academic research participants perceive the teaching profession as one of the most feasible career options for women, due to predominant socio-cultural norms regarding gender (Akhtar 2012). Secondly, it is beneficial for women in terms of managing both a professional career and domestic responsibilities more easily, because of the number of holidays (in summer, two months, and in winter 10-15 days' vacation), 'half day' time commitment and the flexible nature of the job (Khan 2005). As this quote reflects, 'I think [the] education sector suits to women [sic] as it is more comfortable and flexible' (Alice, 35, CP).

7.2.3. Education as Profession gives feelings of pride and predilection

According to faculty members, their profession (teaching) is a prophetic³⁶ profession; therefore; they have feelings of pride and happiness. Apparently, the attainment of a decent and respectable job is a reason for 'feeling of happiness and pride'; however; other social and cultural reasons are perceptible for that sense of happiness and pride. Firstly, from the time of a daughter's early education, parents encourage and support her becoming a teacher or a medical doctor, as they perceive these professions as being more respectable and suitable for their daughters. Therefore a woman, by becoming a teacher, considers that she has fulfilled the aspirations of her parents, and has earned respect for herself and her parents (family) in the community.

³⁶ In Muslim societies, the profession of teaching is linked with the Prophet (PBUH); the guide for humankind. As *Al-Muallim*, an Arabic word, means 'teacher, being a guide teaches students'; therefore, teaching is a profession that is more respectable and called a 'prophetic profession' in Muslim societies.

My parents were so pleased when I became a university teacher because they thought it was an honorable job for me, and would bring respect to me and my family. I am very happy and feel pride when I see that my profession has contributed in bringing happiness and respect for my parents (Juliet, 52, Professor).

Secondly, ‘respect from students’ is seen as the most important reason behind their feelings of happiness and pride. They felt pleasure whenever they got respect from the students; as one of the interviewees expresses: ...at that time I was very happy that I had become a teacher and students were submissively calling me Madam! (Jenny, 36, AP).

The shift in roles from an apparently ‘submissive and obedient student’ to a presumably ‘respectable and knowledgeable teacher’ gives a feeling of a ‘realisation of respect and honour’ (Khan 2006), which further inspires and encourages women towards career development in the teaching profession. It shows the significance of symbolic capital in transporting positive changes in women’s lives, as symbolic capital not only give prestige and power but also enhance the self-esteem of women. Jenny’s professional position (authority) as her symbolic capital (Reay 2004) gives her a sense of power and prestige.

Thus, the interviews’ findings validate the results of past research studies (i.e., Maqsood et al 2005; Ferdoos 2005; Khan 2006) that education and medicine – which were/are considered feminine professions—are still the ‘favourite’ or ‘ideal’ professions for women in Pakistan. This is why the majority of the elite and middle classes choose education and medicine as one of the most suitable career options for women, though now there has been a shift in these trends, and women have been seen in traditionally masculine occupations such as media (electronic and print), engineering, military, and police etc. The majority of the interviewees feel pride in working within an educational institution, and they wanted to see women join this profession- as it is a ‘feminine’ and respectable profession, which elevates social status as well. However, a few of the interviewees wanted to go into traditionally masculine occupations such as journalism, engineering, and law, though they acknowledged the cultural acceptance, good public image and appropriateness of a teaching profession for women in Sindhi society. As an AP illustrates:

Teaching is a noble profession, and particularly, in our male-dominated society, education and medicine are appropriate professions for women as both

professions have a good public image and respect in our society. However, I am not satisfied with my current profession as well as position, because I am not fit for teaching and research. I wanted to be a journalist or lawyer but by chance came into this profession. (Jennifer, 40, AP)

Obviously, an individual's occupational decision depends on human capital characteristics such as his or her level of education, vocational skills/trainings and experience (Sohail 2014); however, in the context of Pakistan's predominantly Muslim society, the concepts of '*pardah*' (veil) and '*izzat*' (honour) are crucial to occupational choices for the majority of women (Ferdoos 2005). *Pardah* promotes segregation between sexes while the notion of '*izzat*' denotes that women personify the 'honour' of the family, which largely restricts their mobility and constrains their occupational choices (Roomi et al 2012). As in the above quote, Jennifer's dissatisfaction with the teaching profession (a feminised occupation) and expressing her interest in journalism and law (traditionally masculine occupations) seems to indicate that her current profession was the choice of her parents, under the influence of the aforementioned cultural factors that affect women's occupational choices. She used to wear a veil during her student life, but she now puts *du pata* on around her neck or shoulders. Explicitly, she acknowledges that teaching is respectable, and women's favourite profession in Pakistan; however, she thinks that teaching is against her nature and that she is not fit for a teaching position. It is notable here that she wanted to be a journalist or lawyer, but she could not choose either of these courses. Instead, she opted for a post-graduate degree in life sciences, and became a university teacher. This is indicative of family influence on daughters' decisions about education and employment in Sindhi society.

Secondly, to them 'teaching' is a noble profession because in Muslim societies, the teaching profession is considered the profession of prophets (Khattak 2014), as the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and Islam have emphasised education. The acquisition of knowledge is one of the main principles of Islam. The first word of the holy Qur'an is '*Iqra*' (read), and the Prophet started his mission by teaching the revealed verses of the Qur'an, so teaching is considered a very sacred profession for Muslims around the globe (Khattak 2014). Thus, they feel pride in doing that noble job, as revealed in the quote below:

I have been teaching here at the University of Sindh for [the] last 7 years. Teaching is my favourite profession and I love it. I feel proud as public image of this profession is good and it is known as 'prophetic profession'. (Donna, 36, AP)

Thus, the views of Jennifer and Donna, though they have different ethnic, social and cultural backgrounds, reveal that education is considered a respectable and prophetic profession in the province of Sindh. Therefore, women prefer this profession, and feel sense of pride about it. Jennifer belongs to a rural Sindhi family, but is interested in masculine occupations (journalism and law) instead of teaching, which is culturally considered suitable for women. On the other hand, Donna belongs to an urban-based Urdu-speaking family, but loves being a teacher, and teaching is one of her favourite professions. It seems that intersections between ethnicity and social background have influence over women's decision-making choices in Sindh, and Urdu-speaking women are independent in their choices, or might have more information and awareness of career development compared to Sindhi women. This might be a result of Urdu-speaking women's better access to cultural and social capitals, being settled in urban zones.

Non-academic participants, who have lower SES, and relatively weak economic, cultural and social capitals compared to academic participants, also have a similar perception about their profession. They perceived that their profession (administrative) has given them respect, and raised their social status. However, the diversity in perceptions of academic and non-academic interviewees regarding their respectability in the workplace can be witnessed in this research. Academic interviewees perceived that their profession (teaching) gave them a sense of respectability, while the non-academic interviewees perceived that working in higher-educational institution (though in lower-ranking positions) gave social recognition, and incited respect within their family and community, rather than in the workplace.

They expressed that they are highly appreciated and respected in community because of their employment at a university. They also shared that women in the community seek their advice on daughters' university education, and employment at a university. It confirms that non-academic interviewees belong to a class where few women are university-educated and in employment; hence; these educated women are approached by women in the community for consultation regarding their daughters' education and employment. One of the non-academic participants expressed her feelings thus:

I am very lucky that I have got job in the university. It is not only a source of income for me and my family, but this job has given me respect and social status. The most important thing that gives me [a] feeling of pride is

appreciation from community women and seeking suggestion for their daughter's university education and employment. (Alana, 40, CP)

Alana considers herself very lucky because she has decent work³⁷, but also respect and appreciation from the community- especially women. Secondly, being in an expert position, she is sought out for suggestions by women in the community regarding their daughters' university education and employment. Hence, the appreciation and respect she receives from the community, and her advice being sought out by women gives her a sense of pride.

According to non-academic participants of this research, women working in the education sector can uphold the 'family honour'—culturally linked to the sexuality of women—and the cultural expectation for daughters to be 'good mothers/women' because education is considered a feminine and respectable profession in Pakistan. This perception of the non-academic participants validates the findings of Kirk (2004), in which she argues that Pakistani women can command 'respect and dignity' and can be elevated to a 'position of status' through teaching as a career because teaching is consistent with a middle class, female habitus. Other past studies (i.e. Sales 1999; Ashraf 2004) also demonstrated that teaching is perceived as a 'worthy', 'safe' and 'widely acceptable' profession for women in Pakistan. Women's participation in employment affirms their personal status and contribution to family prestige (Osella and Osella 2000); however, family honour and status is more important for women in paid work. This is why they prefer to become teachers, or work in educational institutions.

7.2.4. Education as a Career Elevates Respectability

In this section, I will be analysing how these women perceive their social status- being professional women and working in education institutions- which contributes to or elevates women's respect and dignity in society. Both categories of research participants observed that working in the education sector is more respectable than working in other professions, and increases social status, and respect in the workplace and in society. However, teaching as profession is given more respect and worth than other supportive/administrative jobs in the education sector. The perceptions and experiences of both groups regarding their respectability in the workplace was divergent, though both groups observed that higher-education and working in the universities have given

³⁷ Information Technology as an occupation is considered a very decent and highly-skilled profession in Pakistan, and few women are engaged in this profession. Hence, her occupation, along with workplace (the university) has brought respectability in the community (especially from women) as an expert in IT.

them ‘individual recognition’ and ‘self -confidence’, along with enhanced social status and respectability in workplace, as one of academic participants illustrates here:

I am enough lucky that I am an educated professional woman. My university education and profession have raised my self-confidence and given me ‘individual identity’ and recognition in society. If I did not get education, I might be a house-woman without any individual recognition in society. (Florence, 45, Assoc.P)

Academic participants of this study perceived their respectability to be very high in the workplace. The reason behind this is the general respect for the teaching profession in society; therefore, in practice, ‘teachers’ in the workplace are highly respected in general, and by non-academic employees and students in particular. Furthermore, the hierarchical power (teachers in higher positions and support staff in lower-ranking positions) in the workplace also contributes more to the respect of academic employees, as compared to non-academic employees. Academic participants have translated or converted their cultural and social capital into a symbolic capital (power and prestige) (Bourdieu 1986), which entitles them to more respectability and dignity in the workplace, as well as in the community.

Non-academic participants of this study are working as administrative staff, in lower-ranking positions. Hence, their perception regarding their respectability in the workplace was dissimilar to the academic participants’. They do not perceive that their profession brings respectability to them in the workplace, though it does in the family, and society in general. However, they perceive that respectability in the workplace is based on their socio-economic position and social class. Those who are from the middle classes and have a sound economic position are respected more in the workplace than those who have a lower SES, as illustrated below:

My professional job has increased my self-confidence but I do not think it has contributed in my respectability at workplace. Your status and respectability is based on your economic and social position in community and society, if you have the better economic position you are respected and highly appreciated at workplace too. I have noticed here in university we [supportive staff] are treated differently than those of academic staff. (Agnes, 35, LA)

Besides differences in power-hierarchal positions and SES, differences in cultural and social capital for these academic and non-academic interviewees have an influence on the respectability of the research participants in the workplace. Social capital may be defined as ‘... investment and use of embedded resources in social relations for

expected returns³⁸ (Lin 2000, p.786). Hence, a large difference in the social capital of the academic and non-academic staff confirms the proposition that a better origin (social, cultural and economic) promotes access to or use of better social resources (Lin and Dumin 1986).

Similarly, Lin (2000) argues that inequality of social capital occurs when a certain group clusters at a relatively disadvantaged socio-economic position. As the feudal system, capitalists and the elite class dominate mainstream politics, this reflects a historical and structural process in Sindhi society. The result is that social groups differentially occupy social and economic positions in the society, and have unequal opportunities to members of different groups (Khan, Rehman and Chaudhry 2015). For example, children of the elite and middle classes go to private schools (English Medium) while others go to government schools (native language medium). Such inequality in the education system (from primary to tertiary level) produces different social classes (Azam 2015) that have different cultural and social capitals (Bourdieu 1986).

Sources of social capital are familial as well as non-familial ties, including friends, neighbours and networks of 'fictive kinship'³⁹ (Ebaugh and Curry 2000). Most studies (Lin 1999, 1999a, 2000; Campbell and Rosenfeld 1985) have witnessed gender influences on social capital for individuals, because male networks consist of fewer kin and more non-kin, while women's networks are vice-versa (Moore 1990). However, this study suggests weak social capital for non-academic interviewees when compared to female academic participants, because of different class and social origins. The majority of non-academic participants are the first generation in their families who have entered into formal employment, and belong to poor socio-economic backgrounds that reinforce their poor social capital, as people with a lower socio-economic status tend to

³⁸ Social capital is conceptualised as (1) quantity and/or quality of resources that an actor (be it an individual or group or community) can access or sue through (2) its location in social network. The first conceptualisation of social capital emphasises resources—the resources embedded in social relations, or social resources. The second conceptualisation emphasises location in a network or network characteristics (Lin 2000, p. 786).

³⁹ Fictive kinship is a term used by anthropologists and ethnographers to describe forms of kinship or social ties that are based on neither consanguinal (blood ties) nor affinal (by marriage) ties, in contrast to true kinship ties. By incorporating unrelated individuals into an extended family network, weak ties are converted to strong ties, creating relationships of fictive kinship (Wilson 1998). Based on religious ritual or close friendship ties, fictive kinship relationships replicate many of the privileges and responsibilities usually assigned to biological relatives (Ebaugh and Curry 2000). However, in the context of the present study, this term presents women's strategies to desexualise the working relationship and to increase social capital for their security and maximum advantage for their smooth career development.

use family and kin ties (which are usually homogenous) as social resources (Green, Leann and Irene 1995). Hence, these women have contacts or networks with groups of people who have similar socio-economic characteristics and obviously, they are not influential. On the other hand, members of rich-resource networks enjoy access to information and influence in diverse socio-economic strata, while members in resource-poor networks have relatively limited access to information and influential persons (Lin 2000, p. 787).

Further, segregation has been seen not only between men and women, but also between academic and administrative women⁴⁰. Lin (2000) also found that, in general, individuals do share sentiments with others- but with those of similar groups, or sharing socio-economic characteristics (homophily). Due to homophily, and having limited opportunities to establish social networking with academic women and male colleagues, non-academic women interact and share within their group (non-academic), which already has poor resources. Hence, non-academic interviewees, being a relatively disadvantaged group, have weak social and cultural capitals, which further reinforces poor symbolic capital for them.

7.2.5. Job Satisfaction and Social Status

The huge majority of academic survey respondents (80%) were satisfied with their current job position, while only 14 per cent intended to change their profession. The major reason behind job satisfaction was their socio-economic class, as they belong to upper and middle classes, in which university teaching is considered a symbol of higher social status and respectability (symbolic capital).

Secondly, the higher-ranking positions, better pay, independent jobs and flexible working hours (they can fix a time for their lecture or seminar which suits them, in consultation with the head of the department) are major factors behind job satisfaction. During the in-depth interviews, it was noted that a few academic interviewees intended to change their current positions, having a lack of personal interest in research and teaching. Instead, they showed interest in power-related positions like bureaucrats, managers, executives, etc. This indicates that to them, power-related occupations like the Civil Service of Pakistan (CSP) and managerial positions are considered prestigious, which contributes to personal symbolic capital in their particular social group. Symbolic

⁴⁰ The university has arranged separate transportation for employees' accordingly hierarchal positions. There are three categories of bus; (1) for faculty members, (2) for higher-ranking position in administration (Above BPS-15; and (3) for lower-ranking staff.

capital is related to an individual's prestige, and personal qualities such as authority and charisma (Reay 2004, p.47), and linked to class or personal habitus (Bourdieu 1990). That is why individuals choose to invest in what they or their class value as capital, through the 'lenses' of their habitus (Lehmann 2007).

By contrast, 44 percent of the non-academic survey respondents were dissatisfied with their current position, and intended to change their job, while 22 per cent were undecided. The inappropriateness of job positions with their qualifications and skills was the key reason for job dissatisfaction amongst non-academic participants. Besides this, a lack of flexible working hours (as compared to academic participants), no properly fixed/assigned job roles, and frequent transfers from one department to another were also factors behind dissatisfaction with their current position. Thus, the findings of the in-depth interviews validated the findings of Bushra (2012), in which she concluded that flexible working hours, workplace location, clarity of roles, and skills utilization have a highly positive significance on turnover intentions. It is also observed that the relationship between employees and their immediate supervisors plays an important role in employees' performance and satisfaction with their jobs.

However, qualitative findings revealed that the respondents were greatly satisfied with their workplace, but they intended to have a better position in accordance with their qualifications and expertise. The majority of them were post-graduates, but working in lower-ranking positions⁴¹ (e.g. lower than RPS-10), while only a few of them were in a better-ranking position such as computer programmers or librarians (e.g., RPS=14, 16 and 17). For example, Alana and Alice, both computer programmers (RPS-16), were doing receptionist jobs at the computer cluster, where they were given the responsibility of collecting Rs: 5/=per hour from students for using the internet, and also looking after the computers. Thus, their actual position and assigned responsibilities clashed, and they were not satisfied with their assigned roles, which do not accommodate or suit their professional position. As a majority of non-academic research participants belonging to lower-middle classes were struggling for a better socio-economic position in the society, they were looking for higher-ranking positions in accordance with their qualifications and skills, which could elevate their social status and respectability in the

⁴¹ In Pakistan, a job position above RPS -15 is considered of a higher ranking (better social status) while under RPS -10 is considered as clerical position, with lower social status. Primary teachers work in RPS-9, which is considered lower in ranking (though respectable with higher social status) with minimum economic benefits. Therefore, men do not prefer to teach at primary level, and this field is predominated by women.

community. Furthermore, belonging to relatively disadvantaged groups, they have weak social capital and symbolic capital, resulting in feelings of inferiority amongst non-academic participants- particularly in a social space.

The major reason for better payment and other financial incentives for academic staff is their higher-ranking positions (i.e., the lower position of academic staff is Lectureship of RPS-18, while non-academic higher positions were Librarians or Computer Programmers RPS-17). The foremost reason behind non-academic participants' dissatisfaction with their current job position is working in lower-ranking position, while having higher-educational qualifications, as is illustrated below:

My current job position does not suit to my qualifications. I wish to have a better position related to my qualifications, but as far as my work and working environment is concerned, I am quite happy with my roles and work environment. (Nancy, 28, LA)

The above quote reveals that non-academic research participants—whose educational qualifications were higher than the requirement of the job position held—are happy to an extent with their current job position, because they are working with a higher degree-awarding institution. This sense of working with an educational institution gives them feelings of pride and happiness, despite working in a lower-ranking position that does not suit their qualifications. A greater number of non-academic interviewees wanted to change their current position, as they were working in lower-ranking positions even though they had higher educational qualifications. However, those who were working as CPs and Librarians (RPS 16 or 17) were quite happy with their current position. The major reason behind the clash between job position (roles) and their qualifications lies in the prevalent culture of favouritism and nepotism. However, other reasons found were: (i) due to unemployment, these women preferred to work, even though it did not fit with their educational qualifications; (ii) they preferred to work in a university in a lower-ranking position over holding a better position in another sector and away from home; and (iii) they are lacking in social capital because they are from remote backgrounds in terms of education and economics.

7.3. Perception Regarding Workplace Environment

Various research studies reveal that women feel comfortable in, and prefer the education sector as a career option. A research study on women working in the education sector in Bahawalpur (Punjab) reveals that 92 per cent of respondents perceived the education sector to be better for women in Pakistan, though there is

gender inequality, gender discrimination, and poor working conditions in the education sector in Pakistan (Owais et al 2010).

Overall, a huge majority of both groups of survey respondents (90%) were in favour of the statement '*working with educational institutions is more secure and flexible for women than other types of work*'. However, in the previous section it was noticed that a great number (44%) of non-academic research participants were not satisfied with their job, and wanted to change their current job position. Therefore, it is concluded from the above-presented survey statistics that the working environment and conditions at UoSJP are more conducive for women, and they feel safe and secure working in educational institutions.

Similarly, academic and non-academic interviewees observed working in a conducive environment at UoSJP; however, they talked about some issues they had either experienced or observed in the workplace. The research findings on professional women's perceptions and their experiences in the workplace are discussed in following sub-sections.

7.3.1. Patriarchal Practices and Male Dominance

Available literature in gender studies suggests that Pakistani society is traditionally patriarchal (male-dominated), along with class and caste complications (Mumtaz and Salway 2009; Sathar and Kazi 2000), and this is reflected in government and private institutions/departments in Pakistan. Survey findings of this study reveal that only 40 per cent of academic and 64 percent of non-academic participants perceived that '*the university management is supportive for the female employees*'. There is a wide difference in the perceptions of academic and non-academic respondents regarding the attitude of the university management towards female employees. The reason behind this could be hierarchical positions in the workplace, as well as different social class positions. Non-academics, being in a lower-ranking position as well as from a lower social class, are hesitant in sharing or disclosing problems they face in the workplace (Hussain 2008). The majority of academic and non-academic interviewees experienced patriarchal practices (authoritative attitude, along with lack of professionalism) and male dominancy in management and in the attitudes of male colleagues, as one of the interviewees elaborated on below:

I, personally, have observed one thing that most of the male colleagues and males in the top management think: that woman has had this position/job through some channels or political references. They [men] always underestimate the competence and intelligence of women... their attitude is over-respectful or over hostile ... in both forms; it is harmful to women. (Christina, 45, AP)

Christina, who also has been Head of Department, has personally experienced discrimination from male colleagues by ignoring her opinions or looking down on her points of view. Her observation and experience about the perception of male colleagues regarding female colleagues, as outlined above, is an indication of how women's abilities and competencies are dismissed- as is true of women in traditional societies. Similarly, another interviewee's experiences of the practices of patriarchal norms and male dominance are shared below:

Management of our university also works like a patriarch one, and underestimates women's professional abilities and capabilities. Unfortunately, we are lacking professionalism and we have no well-organised system or code of conduct [ethics]. (Caroline, 42, AP)

It is observed that the university management lacks professionalism, codes of conduct or work ethics. As a result, employees- particularly women- are not treated equally, and this approach leads to authoritative practices, with women being seen as the 'weaker sex' in a male-dominated society, exhibited by the biased attitude of management towards female employees. Further, in the above quote, Caroline has raised the issues of 'lack of professionalism' and 'work ethics' which, along with an authoritative approach, is generally seen both in the workplace and in traditional societies.

As in first part of this chapter, it is witnessed that women (academic and non-academic interviewees) perceived that education as a profession, and working in universities, have increased their social status and respectability in general. However, it does not mean that they do not face any discriminatory attitudes or sexist behaviour in the workplace in particular, or in society in general. The reasons behind this contradiction as perceived by female employees lies in gender relations and the male dominated social structure, wherein man considers himself superior to a woman because of gender ideologies of men and women regarding family roles (Bari 1991). For example, culturally, socially, and religiously, man is considered the breadwinner and guardian, while a woman's role is to be a good mother or a good housewife. Further, Pakistan, being a developing country, is still far away from a developed professional mechanism in the workplace that addresses the prevalence of a non-professional attitude. Faisal (2010) suggests that

a lack of professionalism and a lack of effective implementation of stated gender policies is a situation which is very common in public sector organisations in Pakistan.

7.3.2. Treated as a ‘woman’ instead of colleague

The majority of interviewees, academic as well as non-academic, experienced positive and supportive attitudes of their immediate supervisors and male colleagues. However, a few interviewees of both categories experienced attitudes from their immediate boss and male colleagues as being over-respectful or hostile, with hidden intentions and expectations (sexual favours). ‘Over-respectful’ attitude refers to an overtly decent attitude, but covertly it is a strategy of male colleagues (specifically boss and seniors) to trap female colleagues for sexual favours. When a man becomes overly respectful to a woman, he shows extra care, special sympathies, and stresses being available to her at all times. He gives her favours; the main purpose behind his over-respectful attitude is to win her trust for further intimacy. As per the interviewees, such attitudes of male colleagues result in defaming a woman in the workplace, and dishonour to her family in society in general. When a woman is over-respected or over-supported by a colleague in or outside of the workplace, then other colleagues (especially women) may talk about their relationship, implying sexual impropriety, and she may face character assassination. This is what has been described by professional women in their interviews. It was also observed during the interviews that the majority of the academic respondents stated that they prefer to keep themselves apart from their male colleagues- in other words; they completely avoid having friendships with male colleagues. The most important thing regarding male dominance or sexist behaviour which came under discussion during the interviews was *‘considering woman colleagues, “a woman” [as sex object] instead of an equal colleague or a friend’*. Such types of behaviour from male colleagues shows gender discrimination, sexist behaviour and male supremacy in the workplace; as one of the interviewees shares:

Here, most male colleagues are romantic heroes [...] they are waiting for a chance [...] they do respect women, but with hidden intentions behind that respect. They do not take us (women) as their colleagues but as ‘a woman’ and awaiting for [sic] that special day. When I meet my senior, they do not treat me with due respect, and juniors show over-obedient attitude[s]. Simply, I mean they treat me as a ‘woman’ [sex symbol] instead of an equal colleague or professional woman. (Christina, 45, AP)

Christina’s statement reveals her perceptions of the sexist behaviour of male teachers with their female counterparts. Here, the term ‘romantic heroes’ refers to a specific style

of a male colleague, who seeks attention and tries to impress female colleagues. As per interviewees' observation and perception, such types of conduct or style have hidden intentions and expectations. Supporting the experience of Christina, and emphasising keeping her interactions with male colleagues limited, Donna shares:

Overall, the attitude of male colleagues is good, but in our society, a woman has to keep certain limitations. One thing I have observed that is you [woman] cannot have a friendship with male [...] you have to be very careful. In my opinion, it is difficult to keep a friendship with a male because they always take a woman as 'sex object' instead of a good friend. (Donna, 36, AP)

The views of Donna are that male colleagues in the workplace and in Sindhi society might see women as 'sex objects', and they cooperate with or 'respect' women with hidden intentions- which are to form sexual relationships. She has experienced this from her student life to her professional life, and her conclusion is that a man cannot be a good friend at all. As family honour and status is associated with the women of the family, professional women bear a heavy load of family symbolic capital (Osella and Osella 2000), and are considered to be responsible for regulating and upholding their respectability and family honour. This is why Donna, in her interview, stresses keeping certain limitations on and physical distance away from male colleagues.

Similarly, non-academic respondents witnessed their male colleague's attitude as supportive but biased, and with hidden intentions and expectations. If their hidden intentions and expectations are not fulfilled then they became harsh and hostile, and apply various strategies to trap them. Some respondents from both categories had very bitter experiences with their male colleagues. They witnessed that male colleagues consider women as the 'weaker sex', and that is why they cooperate with or support them and expect a favour (sex) in return. One of the non-academic participants shared her experience below:

It is biased and strange. They think that a woman, who has come out of home for work and money, is a characterless. That is the overall mentality of our male colleagues. If they are nice to you, then they expect favours [a sexual relationship] at some point when they get your trust. If their expectations are not met with, then they start character assassination by passing sexual comments at [the] workplace. (Adele, 35, Coordinator)

She observed a sexualised response among her male colleagues, with even apparently supportive and pleasant attitudes ultimately resulting in the situation where it becomes harsh and hostile because they (the male) might have been waiting for the opportunity

to express their hidden intention (for sexual relations). This demonstrates the sexualisation of women's professional identities in the workplace and outside.

It was noticed that there were controversies in the perceptions of participants about the behaviour of their male colleagues. In general, they perceived the male attitude as being supportive and encouraging in the beginning but, with the passage of time, it changes. This is one reason female participants held that a male cannot be a professional friend, and they preferred to distance themselves as long as men take women for granted as 'woman' (sex object) and view female colleague through their male (dominating) lens. One of the non-academic participants shares her experience as such:

Overall, their attitude is supportive, but I have observed that my male colleagues treat me as 'woman' rather than their equal colleague; such [an] attitude hurts me a lot. I think it is man's nature to treat a woman like this. They feel pleasure in passing sexual comments, jokes, and might have sexual intentions behind it; to me, passing comments is sexual harassment and discrimination. (Lisa, 36, CO)

Lisa experience overall supportive attitudes from her male colleagues in general; however, she, like many other academic and non-academic interviewees experienced being treated as 'woman' rather than as an equal colleague. Thus, Lisa's experience, shared above, reveals the prevalence of a typical approach—treating 'woman' as a sex object, and considering her employment as upsetting the male order and peace of mind (Syed 2010; Mirza 1999)—in the workplace, which negates the equality of both sexes in the workplace. As Saeed (2012, 2004) finds, people are still facing difficulty in accepting women as an asset in developing their organisations and educational institutions. Further patriarchal norms (i.e. family honour linked to a woman's sexuality) requires women to uphold their self-respectability and family honour by using different strategies to negotiate (public) space, and to desexualise and redefine gender relations at their workplace (Mirza 1999a). Due to these patriarchal norms and sexist behaviour, both genders- men and women- are segregated, even in the workplace, via means such as separate compartments on public busses, and offices set aside for female employees (Mirza 1999a). For example, there are 'ladies' common rooms' for every female faculty member aside from co-social spaces: women's offices (cabins) in big halls at universities and first seats are reserved in university buses for female faculty members.

7.3.3. Gender Discrimination: Underestimation of Women's Competence

In this study, gender discrimination refers to a type of behaviour or attitude that is experienced by female employees in the workplace by top management, immediate supervisors and colleagues on the basis of their gender, instead of their professional competencies and abilities. This type of discrimination is not the policy of the organisation, but is practiced socially in the workplace. The survey revealed that 26 per cent of academic participants observed that they were considered inferior to men while performing the same roles in the workplace while 14 percent of the responses were undecided. This figure rose drastically for non-academic respondents, 64 per cent of whom observed that they are considered inferior to men while performing the same roles in the workplace. This demonstrates the huge difference in holding symbolic capitals (hierarchal powers and authorities) between academic and non-academic women. As academic women being in high-ranking positions hold the higher social and symbolic capitals (Lin 2001), hence they are relatively less vulnerable to harassment than non-academic who hold lesser social and symbolic capitals.

The majority of interviewees expressed that *de-facto* discrimination based on gender exists though there is no such type of *de-jure* discrimination i.e. in terms of official wages, or in the recruitment and promotion policies of the institution. In practice, women observed discriminatory attitudes of male colleagues, as well as an underestimation of their professional capabilities, intellect and competence, simply because they are women. As illustrated below:

It is not more in systematic form but mostly it seems from the gender-biased attitude of males. They do not express that discrimination verbally, but they do show it by looking down upon female colleagues, questioning [...] females' talents and abilities, and neglecting women's recommendations. (Camilla, 45, Professor)

Professor Camilla's views point to the prevalence of gender discrimination in the workplace, though not in systematic form. To her, male colleagues look down on female colleagues, which in other ways is a negation of women's abilities and capabilities. For example, there is a popular saying about women folk in Sindhi society '*Aurat jo aqal khuree mai*' ('woman's wisdom lies in her heel'). Inheriting the above popular saying from patriarchal Sindhi society, male colleagues in the workplace behave differently towards women, and consider themselves superior to female colleagues in terms of professional capabilities, intellect and wisdom. Thus, there is a tension between male and female colleagues even when they have equal professional

positions or are working under the same category. This 'equal but different' position of women employees at the workplace is a consequence of the 'lifelong project' of gender-identity formation. The formation of gender-identity is a continuous process in which self-image and how an individual sees her/his own life are constructed and reconstructed according to the meanings and values that exist in society (Volman and Dam 1998).

Further, another academic interviewee, reflecting on the socio-cultural structure of Sindhi society, noted:

It does exist in various forms, such as ignoring the opinion and suggestion of women in official meetings, questioning on her competence and abilities. The most common sentence I heard in official meetings during my tenure as the head of the department was 'Oh madam! You are a woman you know nothing'... this is very hurting [sic] and biased sentence. (Christina, 45, AP)

In the above quote Christina, who had been a head of the department and used to participate in official academic meetings, observed that her opinion was ignored in academic meetings, and she felt embarrassed to hear insulting remarks by male colleagues i.e. '*Oh madam! You are a woman and you know nothing*'. Such remarks reflect male dominance and, the manifestation of stereotypical male behaviours in a male-dominated organisation, and as in male-dominated organisation performance will also be judged by the male definition of competencies (Channar, Abbassi and Ujan 2011), women's competencies are underestimated, as Christina pointed out in the above statement. Her statement also shows that she perceives Sindhi society as male-dominated in its social structure, which devalues women. A class system has begun to emerge in Sindhi society over the last two decades with the spread of education and migration from rural areas to cities; however, that emerged class (Sindhi middle class) has a strong legacy of classic patriarchy that degrades women and legitimises the authority of men over women. As Tarar and Pulla (2014) find, patriarchal norms/values are embedded in the socio-political and socio-cultural structure of Pakistani society because of its having a legacy of classic patriarchy and feudalism.

The responses of non-academic female staff were mixed, and they have faced discrimination and victimisation as well. One of the non-academic participants, having 15 years of work experience, illustrated her experiences about gender discrimination thus:

I think deliberately they [males] put obstruction. I mean they do not facilitate. I have heard of many times from boss (male) that women should not be appointed because they mostly remain sick, they seek for maternity leave, frequent leave for childcare and other home matters. (Alana, 40, CP)

This statement shows experience of discriminatory attitudes from management towards female staff in the workplace. The prevalence of gender discrimination does not mean that it is the policy of the university, but it is malpractice by individuals in the upper management of the university. The majority of participants observed gender discrimination in the workplace while a number of the participants believed that there is victimisation because of favouritism, nepotism and a corrupt system, which is discussed in the following section.

7.3.4. Culture of Nepotism and Favouritism

Nepotism refers to supporting someone on the basis of his or her family regardless of ability, education and skills (Sadozai et al 2012). Favouritism is a phenomenon which exists everywhere (Ozler and Buyukarslan 2011). It means preferring someone over others just because management likes him or her. Nepotism and favouritism have become common practice in Pakistani society, which has badly affected the performance of public-sector organisations. Many of the respondents- particularly Urdu-speaking- denied the existence of gender-based discrimination in the workplace; however; they observed practices of favouritism and nepotism in the workplace. To them, the majority of women are victimised because they have no political connection or political reference besides their gender. An AP, talking about the political interference and lack of merit in a public-sector organisation, expresses her experience below:

Not any gender discrimination here; however, weaker sex [women] and persons having no political references or connections faced problems [and] definitely, female employees faced more than those of men employees as they have limited social linkages and connections. I think this all is not due to gender, but is the result of nepotism, favouritism, political interference and lack of merit and professionalism. (Donna, 36, AP)

The above quote is an indication of women's limited access to social linkages, networks, and connection within as well as outside of the organisation, which results in creating hindrances in obtaining employment and promoting their careers. As accumulation and utilisation of social capital are associated with gender (Acker 1992; Timberlake 2005; George and Chaze 2009), and the way men and women acquire social capital are quite different, women's social capital (networks) may not help them as

much as men's, because women tend to have less access to influential people (Campbell 1988; Drentea 1998). Timberlake (2005) argues that women are hindered in their efforts to achieve career advancement and its associated benefits due to their inability to access the social capital that is essential for career advancement. Such inequality of social capital between men and women provides fewer opportunities for women in general. Women from disadvantaged social backgrounds, in particular, find it difficult to mobilise their social resources, contacts and networks to obtain employment and promote their careers. This is because success in career advancement often depends on 'whom you know rather than what you know' (Timberlake 2005, p.42).

Similarly, one of the non-academic interviewees, talking about the practices of nepotism and favouritism in the workplace, expressed her experience along the following lines:

I do not think there is gender discrimination. However, I will say there is a practice of favouritism and nepotism. I have no political support or other connections/references; that is why a suitable position is not given to me. There are many girls who have a simple diploma or intermediate [qualifications], but they are in a good position because of their political background and references. (Agnes, 35, LA)

Agnes' above statement indicates the conducive environment within her department, however, she has been victimised, and not awarded a proper position as per her educational qualifications. This is indicative of the practice of favouritism and political preferences in management, which all economically and politically weaker employees face. One of the reasons behind her lower-ranking position might be that of her weak social capital. On the one hand, she —being a woman in a disadvantaged position- has weak social capital, as past research suggests that the way men and women acquire social capital is quite different, and women tend to have less access to influential people (Campbell 1988; Drentea 1998). On the other hand, her being a widow and belonging to a lower SES means she has no influence in her own social class. Family, ethnicity and social class have a greater influence over women's social capital. Her weak social capital might be the reason behind her lower-ranking position [attendant⁴²], instead of having higher-educational qualifications.

⁴² Because of her weak social capital, she could not get decent employment and chose to work as an attendant because of the economic needs of her family. She got this position (attendant) on the deceased quota (her husband who was employee in the university). She has been working for the last 5 years without any promotion.

Agnes' story shows the importance of intersectionality in gender studies. Here, gender significantly interplays with other social categories such as social position and family background, which are very important for perpetuating the relegation of women. Political support or preference, along with favouritism and nepotism, are widely practiced in the recruitment process- particularly in lower-ranking positions in public or private organisations (Nadeem et al 2015). In this context, therefore, social capital is crucial for obtaining employment and career advancement. In the above quote, Agnes has pointed out that she has no political support- that means she has weak social capital, because of the poor socio-economic and educational background of her family. Here, what interviewees mean by 'political support' is having some kind of affiliation with political leaders or local political workers on the basis of their family relations; caste; *biradari*. This perception has developed among people because legislative assembly members- either in national assemblies, or provincial assemblies- have a certain de facto quota in public recruitment, and ministers are seen distributing job offer orders among their voters or supporters in Pakistan.

Furthermore, non-academic female employees faced problems such as a lack of cooperation and support from colleagues and management, unnecessary explanation letters and show-cause notices from their immediate bosses, and harassment or sexist attitudes from bosses and male colleagues. The majority of non-academic respondents were from the lower-middle class, and therefore are socially, economically and politically weaker than academic interviewees. They faced more discrimination and victimisation when compared with other academic or politically strong respondents (Saeed 2004). Firstly, they are employed in lower-ranking jobs, where hierarchical power from either management or teaching faculty pressurises them. Secondly, they belong to the lower-middle class and are forced to work to meet their economic needs, hence, they do not complain, but prefer to tolerate unnecessary pressure because of the fear of transfer or dismissal from their job (Yasin, Chaudhry and Afzal 2010). Thirdly, they hide these issues from their family, fearing social sanction from said family. There is a lot of social pressure on parents whose daughters are in work.

As already discussed above, there is no such encoded gender discrimination in recruitment and promotion policy in the workplace; however; in this study, gender discrimination has referred to the existence of practices in the workplace which are biased against women because of their gender. Therefore, the perceptions of research

participants were divergent regarding gender discrimination. For example, none of the Muhajir participants perceived or observed gender discrimination; however, they spoke of favoritism and nepotistic practices. On the other hand, Sindhi academic and non-academic participants observed gender discrimination, along with practices of nepotism and favouritism. Differences of perception around gender discrimination and nepotism are seen differently between different groups, i.e. Sindhi and Muhajir participants; academic and non-academic participants.

7.3.5. Sexual Harassment

Findings of many studies suggest that sexual harassment is the most serious issue in the work place in developing countries, and is responsible for employees' poor psychological conditions such as depression, anxiety, and stress, as well as poor organisational performance (Merkin and Shah 2014; Saeed 2004). Most of the participants, either academic or non-academic, asserted that sexual harassment exists at UoSJP, and the younger single women- particularly non-academic staff, and students- face it more frequently. The findings of this study show that the most common category of sexual harassment that exists at UoSJP is that of 'generalised sexist remarks or behaviour'- also known as gender harassment (Till 1980) - that may not necessarily be designed to elicit sexual relations, but does convey the degrading and sexist attitude towards women. The majority of non-academic women face (Till 1980) the second category of sexual harassment: 'seductive behaviour', which is 'inappropriate and offensive behaviour, but essentially sanction-free sexual advances'. Some participants also experienced sexual harassment in the form of 'sexual favours for the promise of reward' (Till 1980) -also known as 'sexual liberty'— which covers solicitation of sexual activity or other sex-related behaviour by the promise of reward. Four academic interviewees faced this type of sexual harassment while none of the non-academic interviewees— although they might have faced it—shared experiences of such a type of harassment. Either they have not faced this form of sexual harassment, or they are unwilling to share because of their lower (weaker) hierarchical position. However, none of the participants discussed (though they may not have shared their true experiences) the fourth (sexual coercion) and fifth (sexual imposition or assault) categories of sexual harassment in the workplace.

An AP with a foreign PhD and fifteen years of work experience confirmed the intimidating and harassing attitudes of male colleagues towards women in terms of

initiating 'friendship' (sexual relationship) and the prevailing sexual harassment practices in the workplace, saying:

After receiving the interview call for Assistant Professorship, I was called by the Dean to visit his office. I, with my head of the department, went to the Dean's office. You know what [the] Dean said? He said to the head of the department 'make her agree to meet [him] in the evening'. What does it mean? I was so angry and left his office. I was victimised for just one thing: that was, to fulfil his 'sexual desire'. I think most of the female employees herein face this type of harassment, but they remained silent and don't disclose it- that is the reason males harass women openly. (Emily, 42, Assoc. P)

The above quote indicates the misuse of legitimate power, and a prevalence of the 'sexual favour for the promise of reward' or 'quid pro quo' form of sexual harassment in the workplace. Previous studies on this subject (i.e., Malik and Ahmed 2013; Saeed 2004; Naveed, Tharwani and Alwani 2010; Yasin, Chaudhry and Afzal 2010) also found that the 'quid pro quo' form of sexual harassment is prominent in almost all public and private institutions in Pakistan. Occurrences of such malpractice are the result of a lack of proper mechanisms to deal with, and no reinforcement of existing policies and procedures of recruitment and promotion. In the above case, the Dean directly offered Emily a promotion if she agreed to have a sexual relationship with him. Such cases might often occur, but women who face sexist attitudes or remarks prefer to ignore the person, due to fear of losing their job and/or honour in the society, and secondly, having no proper mechanism and/or procedure in place to address cases of harassment in the workplace. Thus, the education and employment of these women have provided them with more advancement and greater equality; however, education and employment have not protected them from gender violence, gender discrimination and sexual harassment in workplace and outside of it. Therefore, these employed women and single women in particular, face sexual harassment, which threatens to damage their social status and respectability if they are perceived as losing their modesty or are accused of having illicit relationships. The notion of family honour is linked to women's bodies and sexuality, and influences perceptions of these professional women as 'autonomous but different' from men.

An Assistant Professor with 15 years of work experience confirms the existence of sexual harassment and sexist attitudes in the workplace, and their negative impact on women's careers (as well as on the performance of the organisation), saying:

It is not physical or sexual but verbal harassment. The most frequent and common form of sexual harassment I face is 'indecent jokes or comments'. Whenever I met my ex-director, I felt myself in dilemma or insecure. He always used to pass bad comments and jokes. (Caroline, 42, AP)

Caroline has pointed to the verbal form of sexual harassment, which is common and prominent in the workplace, and that badly affects the careers of women and the performance of the institution as well. A huge majority of respondents directly or indirectly experienced verbal harassment in the form of jokes, comments and gestures from their immediate bosses or senior male faculty members. For example, in the above quote, Caroline was hesitant and felt insecure whenever the head of the department called her, because she was scared of his powerful position.

7.3.5.1. *Survivors' Strategy to Sexual Harassment*

In Pakistan, despite legislation, awareness campaigns against sexual harassment in the workplace, the implementation of a code of conduct and policy procedures remains invisible. Women who have experienced harassment keep the issue secret and do not complain against their abusers because of family honour linked with women's sexuality (Saeed 2004, 2012; Naveed 1998). This is one of the major reasons that most working women who experience such abuse and harassment prefer to remain silent. Even they do not share their experiences with their partners and families, because they are afraid of losing their job.

The majority of interviewees used indirect strategies, which is to ignore the act (Naveed 1998) and isolate themselves from male colleagues and other social activities. Such strategies by these professional women show their differing social positions from men in the workplace. It was also noticed that they develop strategies in advance to avoid any sexist attitude or harassment. These strategies in the workplace include selecting an office space where there is minimum interaction with male colleagues or visitors (Usually, women's office cabins are located in a separate hall; the traditional *burqa* (veil) is replaced by the modern *hijab*). *Hijab* is a relatively recent introduction to Pakistan urban cities, which provides a strategic advantage to working women as wearing the *hijab* in the workplace enables them to look 'modest' as well as 'modern' (Haque 2010, p. 303). Simultaneously, it provides the 'protection' and 'freedom' to facilitate their access to public spaces. The most common strategy by women in order to desexualise working relationships was 'integrating male colleagues into a fictive kinship system' (Mirza 1999). For example by calling their male colleagues *Ada*

[brother] or keeping a social distance between male and female colleagues by limiting their conversation to work-related issues only, by not becoming too frank with male colleagues, and by not participating in social events/office parties.

Participants disclosed that they faced harassment in the form of indecent comments and behaviour but they never reported this to the management (sometimes the managers were the harassers). Before reporting or sharing, survivors of sexual harassment would ask themselves various questions similar to those identified by Naveed (1998, p. 48) in her research. These questions are: Would anyone believe me if I were to report the behaviour? Will I experience some sort of retaliation if I do report the situation? What would be the reaction of my family? The first main question that arises in her mind is about her own dignity and character. She feels that people would doubt her character, and assume her involvement with the perpetrator. The majority of women who face harassment tolerate or ignore the sexist attitudes and indecent comments/jokes and keep their lips sealed, as they are afraid of losing their jobs as well as their honour and respect in the family and society. Secondly, there is no code of conduct and/or professional mechanisms available at their place of work to address the issue of harassment.

The majority of respondents (80%) believe that they are able to handle the issue of harassment, as it is not physical or coercive but in the form of indecent behaviour. Therefore, they ignore instances of this, and do not give their male colleagues the opportunity to become more frank and closer. To them, the best strategy is 'indirect' (to ignore it); however, in some cases, they reported that giving a *shut-up call*⁴³ is an effective one. The major reasons behind avoiding 'direct strategies' or not reporting or complaining to the authority were fear of character assassination, humiliation in society, worse retaliation by the harasser, difficulty in providing solid evidence and a lack of knowledge about the existing laws and procedures in the workplace.

7.4. Conclusion

This chapter demonstrates the perceptions and experiences of female employees (academic and non-academic) about their experiences in their positions at the university, and any respectability they have earned through their higher education and profession at

⁴³ Women who face sexist remarks or behaviour warn the perpetrator that if he does it next time then they will complain to the higher authority and inform other colleagues, and his parents as well. This strategy is used as a measure by developing social pressure.

the workplace. Findings suggest that teaching in higher-education as a profession, or working with higher-education institutions elevate women's social status and provide them with a feeling of pride, because they perceive that education is the most suitable and culturally-recognised profession for women in Sindhi society. Thus, the findings of the study corroborate those of past studies (Ghazala and Khalid 2012; Maqsood et al 2005). On the other hand, the findings also demonstrated their experiences of male dominance; underestimation of women's competence and intellect; gender discrimination; and a prevalent culture of favouritism in the workplace. Similar findings were also concluded in past studies on women working in formal sectors in Pakistan (Ali et al 2011; Bari 2000). The most common strategy employed by women in order to desexualise relationships with male colleagues in the workplace seen at UoSJP was 'integrating male colleagues into a fictive kinship system' (for example, by calling their male colleagues *Ada* [brother]) or keeping a social distance between male and female colleagues by limiting their conversation to work-related issues only, by not becoming too frank with male colleagues, and by not attending office parties.

Thus, the findings of the chapter showed a contradiction between women's perception of their elevated social status, and their experiences of discrimination, harassment and not being treated equally in the workplace. This contradiction is because of developed gender relations in society and, furthermore, the lack of professionalism and lack of implementation of gender policies in the workplace. As Syed (2010) noticed, women in the public domain- such as employment and politics- are still considered provocative, offensive and a threat to male authority. Hence, women face various kinds of discrimination in the workplace. The following chapter focuses on findings related to women's perceptions of social status and respectability in the community.

Chapter Eight: Experience of Social Status in the Community & Societal Attitudes

8.1. Introduction

Building on Chapter 7, this chapter analyses the perceptions of professionals regarding their social status in the community, and their perceptions about societal attitudes towards professional women.

Pakistan has an almost entirely Muslim population and the most powerful common factor for people is that of ‘religious identity’; however; linguistically and culturally, Pakistani society is heterogeneous. Pakistan falls within the ‘patriarchal belt’ (Caldwell 1982), or the geographical area of ‘classic patriarchy’ (Kandiyoti 1988; Agrawal 1997; Kazi and Sathar 2000; Isran and Isran 2012) —a form of patriarchy maintained and reproduced by the patrilocal extended household—which is not encouraging for women. Pakistani society is predominantly a rural society⁴⁴, based on extended kinship, caste, feudal and patriarchal relations, and the notion of ascribing low status to women is common in such extended settlements. The common practice of cousin or cross-cousin marriages in rural areas plays an important role in strengthening patriarchy and maintaining patrilocal extended kinship bonds. By contrast, in urban settlements, family patterns are those of nuclear or semi-nuclear and, unlike the village, relatives and members of the same caste have less possibility of living in adjacent catchments. Changes in family patterns in urban areas have been seen, but they vary from class to class. For instance, women belonging to the elite families and upper middle classes are encouraged towards higher education (even abroad) and better employment, and their public appearance is also acceptable in certain selective social circles. While women from the lower and lower middle classes do have entry to public spheres, they struggle significantly within their family, with their social setup, and must maintain their ‘honourable’ presence in the public sphere (Tabassum 2011).

The status of professional women in Pakistani society is heterogeneous and intersectional. It varies from class to class and is also dependent on socio-demographic factors i.e. locality/residence, education, employment, marital status, ethnicity, caste and class, which also affect professional women’s status in the community and in society in general. Keeping these socio-demographic factors in mind, in this chapter I have

⁴⁴ According to the 1998 Census of Pakistan, 67.50% of the population lives in rural areas, while 32.50 % live in urban areas. <http://www.statpak.gov.pk>

attempted to analyse views on the social status of these professional women in the community.

This chapter also investigates professional women's perceptions about societal attitudes towards women in paid work, as well as their perceptions about patriarchy and male dominance in society. Pakistani society is male-dominated in its socio-cultural structure. The extended or joint family system is predominant, though nuclear and semi-nuclear family norms are now emerging in urban areas. Due to Pakistan having the influence and legacy of classic patriarchal norms (Isran and Isran 2012; Tabassum 2011), a woman's paid work and her economic contribution to the family are not widely accepted or recognised, particularly in the lower middle classes in urban areas. In rural areas and within the lower middle classes, women's paid work outside the home is still considered a matter of honour and societally, men's relying on women's earnings is considered immoral '*besahram dhayer je kamae paya khaen*'⁴⁵, as women who worked for wages used to be seen as a sign of economic poverty and men's inability to provide (Mumtaz and Salway 2009). Therefore, it is greatly significant to explore and analyse professional women's experiences of societal attitudes- including family perceptions about women's paid work outside the home- in these socio-cultural circumstances.

8.2. Experience of Social Status in Community

Pakistan is heterogeneous in terms of ethnicity (Punjabi, Pashtu, Balochi, Sindhi, and Muhajirs etc.), rural-urban divide, economic development, tribal system, legal system, feudalisms, caste and panchayat practices (Sathar and Kazi 2000). Therefore, the status of women in Pakistan is a complex phenomenon, and there are no established uniform indicators to measure this status in the society. Though Pakistan is an Islamic country, culture and region have a greater influence on people's lives than religion (Sathar and Kazi 2000). Hence, many interpretations regarding women's roles and their status in society are derived from the subcontinental (Indo-Pak) culture. Practices of parallel justice systems like *jirga* and *panchayat*⁴⁶ are generally unsympathetic to women (Bhattacharya 2014), and degrade the social status of women in society. Additionally, different socio-cultural and socio-demographic factors either have positive or negative

⁴⁵ This phrase is mostly uttered by people to degrade those men whose family women are engaged in paid work outside of the home. It means that those men who rely on earnings of their women are shameless.

⁴⁶ Panchayat is a local-level governing body in the Indian subcontinent, and it is also observed in Pakistan after her independence in 1947. Panchayat is run by local elites and feudal lords in rural areas, and enjoys unlimited power over the underprivileged people of society. In the Province of Sindh, cases of *karo kari* (honour killings) are resolved in local *Panchayat* or *Jirga*.

impacts on women's social status or position in society. Therefore, bearing in mind the aforementioned social categories and socio-demographic factors, this research has attempted to investigate women's perceptions and experiences of their own social status in the community. Thus, the chapter focuses on the influence of women's intersecting social categories, such as family, *zaat* (caste), marital status, class, ethnicity, and region; and presents intra-categorical comparison. Reporting on these findings is presented in the following sections.

8.2.1. Region, Caste and Women's Social Status

Geographically and linguistically, Sindh has remained divided into two parts: *Sirro* and *Laar* (Upper Sindh and Lower Sindh), but recently, due to rapid urbanisation and industrialisation, it has also witnessed a clear-cut division between its urban and rural populations. In recent years, a huge change has been seen in the attitudes of urban and rural families regarding women's education and employment. Thus, both parts of Sindh province have diversities in their culture, family norms, traditions, and living standards. Secondly, there is still a strong feudal system in Upper Sindh- particularly in Ghotki, Jacobabad and Larkana districts- which puts more restrictions on women's paid work and physical mobility, as compared to Lower Sindh. Therefore, cases of honour killings are also higher in Upper Sindh than in Lower Sindh (Bhanbhro et al 2013). Due to these socio-cultural differences, the status of women is seen differently in both parts of the province of Sindh. This research observed women's caste and place of residence (Sathar and Kazi 2000; Mumtaz and Salway 2009) as the intersecting and influencing factors of their social status in society. Table: 12 shows frequency distribution of interview participants by their locality/region sections

Table 11: Frequency distribution of Interviewees by their location⁴⁷

Participants	Upper Sindh		Lower Sindh		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
Academic	04	20	16	80	20	100
Non-academic	05	25	15	75	20	100
Total	9	22.5	31	77.5	40	100

Source: Own field interview in October (2013)

⁴⁷ In this study, Upper Sindh represents Sukkar and Larkana divisions, while Lower Sindh represents Karachi, Hyderabad, and Mirpurkhas divisions

Statistics in the above table reveal that a huge majority of both academic and non-academic interviewees belonged to Lower Sindh, which reflects on the prevalence of different socio-cultural norms regarding women's paid work outside the home. Research findings unfolding the complexity and intersections of multiple inequalities (Crenshaw 1991; McCall 2005; Ludvig 2006) reveal differences in the perceptions of interviewees about their social status- not only amongst participants of two groups, but also amongst participants of the same group. The locale and caste of participants intersect participants' gender (Mumtaz and Salway 2009) and have a greater influence on their social status. Participants belonging to Lower Sindh observed a practice of '*salah-mashwara*', roughly translated as 'consultation and advice or discussion and opinion' in family matters, though the ultimate authority was male. By contrast, participants from Upper Sindh explained that they were not consulted in major family matters, as one of the interviewees belonging to Upper Sindh illustrates below:

I will say that the recognition of your social status depends on your family and caste; how your family and caste treat women. My father is a landlord, he invested in my education, but when I took the decision regarding my life partner the whole family and even members of my caste opposed my decision. After years, I tried to have a reunion with my parents but they did not accept and respect me. Still I could not wash out the label of 'bad woman'. Sometimes I regret having gone against my parents' wishes and will. (Barbara, 55, AP)

The intersection of family, *zaat/Biradari* (caste/kinship) and region have a great impact on women's position in Sindh, as can be witnessed in Barbara's life story. Thus, research findings suggest the significance of intersectional approach (Crenshaw 1989, 1991) in assessing the position of women in Sindhi society. The *zaat* system⁴⁸ in Pakistan is not similar to that of Hindu caste, which is based on 'purity and pollution'; however, it is very hierarchical and determines an individual's occupation, status, prestige and power (Mumtaz and Salway 2009). Thus, Muslim higher-castes discourage their daughters to marry outside of their caste.

Secondly, the feudal system- which is strong in Upper Sindh, compared with Lower Sindh- pressurises women to get married within *biradari* (kinship) because of fears over

⁴⁸ Muslims are divided into two categories: (1) the Ashraf or nobles, supposedly descendants of Arab immigrants. They belong to four tribes. First two of these, in the theory of Arab origin are Sayed and Sheikh, while the other two have ethnic names, Pathan and Mughal. Sayeds are descendants of daughter of the Prophet, Fatima, and Hazarat Ali. (2) The non-Ashraf; the common people with Indian origin. Among the non-Ashraf, there are three level of status (1) the converts of superior castes, who are mainly Rajput, (2) occupational groups corresponding to the artisan castes of the Hindus, and (3) converted Untouchables who have preserved their functions. (Dumont 1970, pp. 207-208)

the distribution of land, which may further reduce the symbolic capital (prestige and power) of the family (Khatak, Brohi and Anwar 2010). Thirdly, the region of Upper Sindh is more traditional because of feudalism and impacts of Baloch culture on the region. These three social categories have significant implications on Barbara's social status and identity.

In the local cultural context, individuals' social identities are grounded in relations with others (family, caste, kinship etc.) and s/he is identified first by *zaat*, then by father's name (husband, and later sons for women) and finally his or her own name (Mumtaz and Salway 2009). Barbara's family disowned her and so did the caste; thus, she lost the respect and dignity that is supposed to be achieved through higher education and a higher-ranking position such as a professor. In the local cultural context, a good woman is one who is submissive and upholds family honour and dignity (Hussain 2008). Thus, in such a situation, it is the woman who pays a heavy price: 'losing collective identity and self-respect' for breaching family, caste and regional cultural norms.

8.2.2. Ethnicity and Women's Social Status

The majority (34) of the interviewees of the research were Sindhi, while only six (five academic and one non-academic) interviewees were Muhajirs. The findings of the interviews showed a diversity in the social statuses of Sindhi and Urdu-speaking participants, which indicates the intersection of ethnicity and gender (Crenshaw 1991). It was noticed that Urdu-speaking participants have enjoyed a more equal position and social status in the family, as well as in the community, compared to Sindhi participants. The reasons behind the different social status of both Sindhi and Muhajir women were their ethnic, geographical, familial and educational backgrounds. Sindhi society is rural-based and people are engaged in agriculture; hence, Sindhi participants of this research study have an influence of agrarian and patriarchal norms, even if they migrated to cities. Perceptions of the influence of joint family patterns and patriarchal norms on the Sindhi participants of this study are reflected below:

Definitely, my social status is better as compared to my uneducated mother. She had no access to money and personal shopping. I earn, and have control over my income and resources, so my social status is higher and even I feel more respected in the community, and that respect and social status is because of my profession (teaching). Having all that, I will have to admit that [the] final authority is the man [husband], because of our social structure. (Diana, 35, AP)

Diana's parents belonged to a rural area, and she had primary schooling in her native village- then, the family migrated to Hyderabad city for better economic and educational opportunities. Her husband's parents live in a village, thus, the couple has a rural background with the legacy of an extended family and patriarchal norms. Having all this, she perceived that she has a better social status than that of her mother—an illiterate housewife—in the community. Here one can see that gender and spatial marginality further intersecting with 'illiteracy' marginalise Diana's mother's status within and outside the home (Grünenfelder and Schurr 2015).

During interviews, it emerged that she also owns a house and has control over her income, but she still considers herself dependent on her husband. On the one hand, she expressed that they make mutual decisions but on the other hand, the final authority in the family is her husband. Here Diana's cultural, social and symbolic capital (Bourdieu 1987, 1986) have positively contributed to her social status within her household; however, her perception of dependency is seen as a result of gender and the cultural constitution of female identity (Shah 1986; Jeffery, Jeffery and Lyon 1989; Mumtaz and Salway 2009).

This also reveals that a professional woman may have feelings of social insecurity because of the socio-cultural pressures that support the male as head of the family. Her dependency might be invisible, and based on the prevailing cultural notion 'the man is head of the family' in Sindhi society. Additionally, it shows that the gendered social structure is very important to Diana, and she may seek her own autonomy and independence from her own interpretation within the ideology of 'togetherness and interdependence' (Mumtaz and Salway 2009), which binds the activities and resources of the family (White 1992; Mumtaz 2002).

In such socio-cultural settings, professional women create some strategies within a set of concrete constraints to negotiate their identity and recognition in the family and community. Kandiyoti (1988), calling women's strategies 'patriarchal bargains', explains how women living under patriarchy strategise to maximise security and optimise their life options (Tabassum 2011). These patriarchal bargains hold a powerful influence over the shaping of women's gendered subjectivity, and determine the nature of gender ideology in different contexts (p. 275). Diana showed that women's responses to male dominance vary widely, according to the objective opportunities available under each particular variant of patriarchy. Such responses range from eager collaboration-

whereby women act as devout guardians of patriarchal mores and values- to skillful maneuverings to make gains while avoiding overt conflict, to different levels of passive and active resistance (Sanauddin 2015, p. 58).

By contrast, Muhajir respondents perceived their social status as being equal to that of their male family members (within the family), and they were consulted equally in family matters and decisions. Muhajirs, having better educational and urban backgrounds, have been engaged in paid work or the service sector. Thus, the socialisation and upbringing of both Sindhi and Muhajirs participants in this research had been divided into two different socio-cultural and socio-economic settings. Therefore, comparatively, Muhajir respondents saw themselves as having a better social status than that of Sindhi interviewees in terms of family decision-making, social mobility, and participation in public events, as is reflected in the statement below:

I have control over my income and all financial resources, and an equal say in decision-making, and we make all decisions mutually. I perceive my social status [as] equal to that of my husband in my family and community. In terms of professional career and income, my position is far better than my husband's. (Chelsea, 45, AP)

An apparent difference in the above statements of Sindhi and Urdu-speaking respondents confirm the impact of ethnicity on feelings of social status for professional women in their communities. The Muhajir interviewee perceived her social status as equal to her husband's in the family and community and calls herself an 'independent professional woman'. By contrast, a Sindhi interviewee acknowledges the authority of her husband as head of the family, though she perceives that her profession has raised her social status and respect in the community. This difference is because both groups (Sindhi and Muhajirs) have a diverse social, cultural regional and educational backgrounds; and they possess various degrees of cultural, social and symbolic capital (Bourdieu 1986). For example, the Muhajirs are well-educated and settled in big cities, while the Sindhi are comparatively less educated, belonging to rural areas, and have a strong legacy of feudalism and classic patriarchy.

8.2.3. Type of Family, Class and Women's Social Status

Available literature in gender studies in the context of South Asia suggests that family patterns have both positive and negative effects on the social status of women either engaged in formal, paid work or in informal work (Waseem et al 2008; Ferdoos 2005; Sathar and Kazi 2000; Kazi and Sathar 1996). Similarly, the findings of my interviews

expose that both women's education and employment play an important role in women's status, however, family patterns and household socio-economic conditions have a potential influence on the women's social status, in and outside of the family (Gupta and Yesudian 2006; Sathar and Kazi 2000). Both categories of respondents- either from extended or the nuclear families- experienced that their paid work was accepted and appreciated in their families. 13 out of 20 non-academic interviewees observed some kind of restrictions and limitations from the family- such as avoiding mingling with male colleagues, avoiding social activities, and returning straight back home from work- however, they reported greater participation in decision-making in the family.

It was observed from interview analysis that a nuclear or semi-nuclear family has a positive impact on the social status of women while the extended and joint family has the opposite. Research participants living in a nuclear or semi-nuclear family reported having more freedom, consultation in family matters, and access to resources (Sathar and Kazi 2000) compared to those living in extended or joint families. The social status of professional women in general, and those living in a nuclear or semi-nuclear family in particular, has changed due to education, employment (paid work), and changes in family norms- but that does not mean she has an equal position to that of 'man' in the community and society. Participants observed the prevalence of male dominance in Sindhi families; however, it is lessening in the nuclear or semi-nuclear families, as one of the academic participants illustrates:

Definitely, [a] professional woman has earned her social status and respect in society, but I do accept that it is a male dominating society and he has the final authority. Now there is enough change, women have got an education, women are talented, they have abilities [...] we have proved it but our males have not accepted it yet. He still has the same psyche and mentality that woman is 'sinif-e- nazik' (the innocent gender) [...] she needs man's support in one way or another. (Kate, 55, Professor)

Kate belongs to an urban-based educated family, while her husband belongs to a rural-based extended family. Thus, the couple's parental families have different family patterns and values with regards to women's position and role in society. Secondly, the couple's parental families have different socio-economic classes; i.e. Kate's family is middle class and engaged in paid work, while her husband's parental family is rural-based middle class and engaged in the agricultural sector. Thirdly, her husband is already married, he lives in his parental house while Kate—being a second wife—lives

in her own house in the city where she works. Thus, she has experienced a different social status in her husband's parental family in comparison with her own nuclear family. Therefore, in the above statement, she talked about male dominancy and expressed that males, considering woman a 'weaker sex', have not yet accepted her talent and abilities.

It is concluded from the above discussion that the intersection of women's class and familial background influences positions of professional women (Crenshaw 1991; Ludvig 2006). Therefore, the social status of women in paid work varies from family to family, class to class, and region to region, and largely depends on the socio-cultural and socio-cultural patterns of the family. The above quote further suggests that women in paid work from certain family backgrounds- such as educated parents; urbanised nuclear families- have more freedom and say in decision-making processes because they are socialised in more egalitarian families, where women's higher-education and paid work is welcomed as it increases the individual's prestige and power (Bourdieu 1986; Sullivan 2001).

8.2.4. Marital Status and Women's Social Status

Culturally and religiously, marriage is an obligation for women in particular because traditional societies (like South Asian) expect that a woman must be protected by a male, such as her father, brother, husband or son (Qadir et al 2005). Therefore, single women living alone are almost unheard of. In a traditional family, the mother/mother-in-law has higher social status, and also enjoys the power to command other young women, and even younger male family members (Isran and Isran 2012; Tabassum 2011). Thus, in patriarchal societies, mother (being the first agent of socialisation) transmits the patriarchal norms to young family members- particularly to young girls (Kandiyoti 1988). Young girls are discouraged from having a career and are encouraged [pressured] by family, relatives and even friends to get married and settle down at a young age. Due to this cultural notion, as well as Islam's emphasis on marriage- particularly for girls- at a young age, single professional women are given less respect compared to married professional women. There is also a perception that married professional women receive more respect and social acceptance than single professional women in the workplace and in society. Due to the significance of intersectionality, I have explored the social status of participants by using an intra-categorical intersectional approach (McCall 2005), i.e. participants' marital status as a category is

used to compare the perceptions of married, unmarried, and widowed/divorced participants about their social status.

Almost all married academic interviewees perceived their social status as being better, and felt that there was more acceptance, as well as recognition of, their profession in society than for unmarried women of the same group. To them, unmarried professional women are not given due respect, and are given 'bad names' by their colleagues and society. A view was also shared by interviewees that a single professional woman faces character assassination, harassment, and sexist attitudes more so than those who are married. It was observed that marriage, as a compulsion of society, plays an important role in the social status and respect of any professional women in the community, as illustrated below:

Married professional women are given more respect as compared to single professional women; still our society does not accept single professional women. We are part of the family; we have no individual liberty; we cannot go against our traditions. I can travel alone, but I will prefer to ask or seek his [husband's] suggestion. I can buy and sell the property, but again, I will consult with him [...] that is mutual. (Cathy, 45, AP)

The above quote reveals how marriage is important for women in Sindhi society. It not only increases social status, but also gives social security and respect to professional women in the workplace, as well as in society in general. Further, as Sindhi society is male-dominated in its socio-cultural and socio-political construction, feelings of isolation and wanting a sense of security also pressurise professional women to get married. Therefore, it was observed that married professional women consider themselves more secure, being married and making a contribution to the family income.

Similar to the academic interviewees, unmarried non-academic interviewees were also living in an extended family but, interestingly, the majority of married respondents (10 out of 16) were also living in an extended family. This shows that the majority of non-academic staff belong to lower middle classes, wherein the extended family is a dominant cultural norm. One of the non-academic interviewees, having more than 30 years of work experience, shared her experiences about her social status below:

Married professional women have a better social status and respect in society than those of unmarried professional women, but successful marital life depends on the nature and personality of spouse and their families. I am independent and have control over my own income, but I shall say that we make all decisions

mutually and share everything, so our income is joint not personal. (Lora, 55, DO)

To her, marriage is important and gives her respect in society; however, successful marital life depends on the nature and personality of one's spouse and their family background; not on the level of qualification of partners. She expressed that education and employment give you a better social position; however, the successful marital status depends on the personality and nature of one's partner.

By contrast, the perception of single professional women about their social status and respectability was categorically different from those of married interviewees. To single women, their social status is simply better than that of women who are not employed, while in society their social status is somehow uplifted because of their profession, but again, it is not equal to that of men. Meanwhile, their experience of respectability is also totally different from those of married fellows. They perceived that the concept of 'good woman' and 'bad woman' is derived for patriarchal norms; hence, all those professional women who accommodate themselves to the fixed norms of 'good woman' are respected and appreciated in the community, while those who violate those norms are considered bad. One of the single academic interviewees illustrates her social status and respectability in the community below:

Definitely, economic independence uplifts a professional woman's status but again the question arises, is it equal to the man of my own level? The answer is a big 'no'! My social status is only better than women who are not employed. Society accepts in terms of earning money but not in terms of equal social status. The concept of respectability of women [is] based on patriarchal notion 'good and bad woman'. Therefore, to me 'honoured professional women are money making machines and darling dolls for their husbands'. (Emily, 40, AP)

She admitted that single professional women are considered bad in the workplace and in the community, but the price you pay for being an 'honoured woman' or 'good woman' is bigger than for being a 'bad woman'.

Findings from the interviews also imply that professional women are struggling with the established concept of the 'honoured woman', and many professional women have challenged this concept. This has resulted in an increasing number of single professional women- by their choice, or due to other factors- in Pakistan. They perceived that profession (employment) only gives self-confidence and economic independence, but does not entitle women to social status and respectability in a society which is male-dominated, and where the concept of 'family honour' is linked to the sexuality/bodies of

women (as expressed by Emily in the above quote). Additionally, society considers 'good women' to be those who are submissive to their parents, avoid arguing with their father/brother/husband, and follow the established code for women (Bari 2000, 1991; Ibraz 1993; Rehman 1993; Khawar and Shaheed 1987).

Thus, one can conclude from the discussion on the perceptions of married and unmarried professional women that both see the social status and respectability through different lenses. However, there is no doubt that marriage is compulsory for both sexes in general, and for women in particular. As per socio-religious norms, a woman's social status and respectability are essentially linked with her marriage and familial life, and a woman who has a disastrous marital life is considered a 'bad woman' (Satahr and Kazi 2000). Even divorce is a legally and religiously accepted practice, but socially and culturally, it is considered taboo.

Therefore, in such socio-cultural settings, the majority of professional women compromise and accommodate themselves within the frame of 'good woman' rather than being active professional women. That results in greater social acceptance and respectability for them. Those who are unmarried have a different school of thought, and reject the established concept of 'good woman', and respectability that is linked to a woman's sexuality and body (Bhanbhro et al 2013). They believe that women's social status and respectability based on established norms of 'good woman' is man-made, and used as a tool of control over women's intellect and physical mobility (as expressed by Emily in the above quote). Thus, they believe that their profession has not given them social status and respectability in the community/society, but they have gained economic and physical independence.

8.3. Experience of Societal Attitudes

I have presented the perceptions of professional women about their social status and respect in the family and in the community while exploring the socio-demographic factors i.e. locality/residence, ethnicity, family, and marital status of the interviewees in the above sections. The second part of this chapter will discuss professional women's experiences regarding societal attitudes towards their employment. Findings of in-depth semi-structured interviews are reported in the following sections.

8.3.1. Family Appreciates Paid work

Recent research studies on women in paid work in Pakistan (Ferdous 2005; Maqsood et al 2005) show positive changes in the attitudes of parents regarding their daughters' education and employment. Owais et al (2010), in their research on women working in the education sector in the Punjab found that 78 per cent of parents' attitudes towards their daughters working in the education sector was positive and supportive, while only 13% had a negative attitude towards their daughter's paid work in the education sector. My survey findings reveal that the overwhelming majority of academic and non-academic respondents (92%) experienced positive and supportive attitudes from their families (father/husband) towards their professional work. The majority of academic respondents (92%) and non-academic respondents' (82%) families were happy with their professional work. Further, the survey revealed that the majority of academic and non-academic respondents' families (88 per cent and 78 per cent, respectively) had recognised the contribution of female employees to their respective family incomes. It revealed that 90 per cent of academic respondents', and 66 per cent of non-academic respondents' families felt pride in their daughter/daughter-in-law's professional work.

It was reported in these research findings that parents have been remarkably encouraging and appreciative of their daughter's paid work in the education sector. Interview findings of this study have corroborated the past research (e.g., Maqsood et al 2005; Ferdous 2005). The majority of respondents from both groups observed a very positive and cooperative attitude from their parents. Married respondents, both academic and non-academic, observed their husbands' attitude to be very positive and encouraging regarding outside paid work. One of the academic interviewees, talking about her parents and in-laws' encouragement and appreciation of paid work (and support in housekeeping and child caring) stated:

My family's attitude towards my job and me is very positive and supportive. My parent family, as well as my in-laws, supported me a lot. My husband looked after children when I was doing my PhD. Simply, my family supported me in career, housework, including child care. (Florence, 40, AP)

Due to the spread of education and changing family patterns, women's paid work is being appreciated by families. This emerging trend is an indication of egalitarian family patterns in urban-based educated families (Ferdous 2005). The above quote reflects the family norms of middle-class nuclear families, which are very positive and supportive of women's education and employment, and spouses share the work burden in the

household, including childcare and childrearing. These positive changes in family patterns and norms in educated families are also appreciated and endorsed by the interviewees. Such practices are widely witnessed in lower middle-class families, who cannot afford servants. Elite and (Upper) middle-class families prefer to have maidservants for housework, as having servants demonstrates economic wellbeing and gives them higher social status, prestige and power (symbolic capital) in the community (Hussain 2008; Zafar 2014). Here the findings demonstrate the significance of women's cultural and economic capital, and its conversion into symbolic capital.

8.3.2. Neighbours and Community Giving Respect

The survey data reveals that both groups (58 per cent of the academic group, and 66 per cent for non-academic) experienced positive attitudes from their neighbours and community. Almost all academic interviewees witnessed very positive, supportive and respectful attitudes by neighbours and the community; however, they opined that the attitude of one's neighbours or community depends upon the socio-economic class of one's neighbours and locality, as one of the academic interviewees illustrates:

It depends [on] where you are living. I am living in a teachers' society; all are educated and most of the women are in paid work, so their attitude is very good, supportive and respectful; however, it might not be the same in other remote or slum localities. (Barbara, 55, AP)

Most of the academic respondents were from the elite and upper-middle or middle classes which highly regard their women's institutionalised cultural and social capital (Bourdieu 1986; Ferdoos 2005). Additionally, they were living in the University of Sindh Employees' Housing Society (USEHS). Thus, being of the same social class meant sharing a collective professional identity (teacher community), workplace, locality, and cultural values, which created a sense of 'oneness' amongst academic interviewees (Rind 2012). That could be why none of the academic interviewees observed any harsh or degrading attitudes from their neighbours or community. The above quote reveals that the locality and feelings of the in-group make Barbara feel respected and well-treated. However, she perceives that such kinds of acceptance and respect for professionals may not be seen in remote and rural areas. Basically, she belongs to a higher-caste and feudal family from Upper Sindh, and experienced exclusion from her family and caste because of her 'out of caste' love marriage.

On the other hand, Emily, who belongs to a rural area and is the first woman from her village to hold a PhD degree from abroad, is perceived by the community (villagers) as

a very positive light. She challenges the stereotype of rural people being against women's education and paid employment. She shares her observations and experiences about her neighbours and the community below:

I think they [villagers] are more cultured than those of degree holders (male colleagues). They [villagers] are poor, simple, and ignorant of [the] world, but their mental level is very high; I mean in terms of morality and humanity. When I returned from abroad after [gaining] a PhD, they came to my home and congratulated me and hugged me. They were so happy and they felt proud of my academic achievement. (Emily, 42, AP)

Emily, being the only woman in her department, has also experienced harsh attitudes from her colleagues and has faced harassment in the workplace, but observed a very positive and respectful attitude from her neighbours and immediate community (village). The positive and respectful attitude of some neighbours towards women in paid work (teaching) could be an indication of changing cultural values, and the increasing importance of women's education and paid work in Sindhi Society. Further, positivity towards and respectfulness of this in rural-based communities (villagers) reflects the respect for and acceptance of the teaching profession in rural areas of Sindh, though rural Sindh is comparatively more patriarchal than its urban areas. Thus, the socio-cultural acceptance and reverence for the teaching profession are widely acknowledged, though it cannot be generalised in the case of a woman teacher as caste, clan and locality have a potential influence on the status of a woman, and acceptance of her paid work, in Sindhi society.

After analysing the experiences of academic interviewees regarding the attitudes of their neighbours and community, I will analyse the perceptions and experiences of non-academic interviewees about the attitudes of their neighbours and community in the following section.

The experience of non-academics regarding the attitudes of neighbours and the community were mixed; however, in general, they found the attitudes of their neighbours and community to be positive and respectful. It was observed that as in cities people have less interaction with their neighbours, and there is no such a strong sense of 'community' or 'oneness' as seen in villages and small towns, people are less concerned about the professions and personal lives of others. One of the non-academic interviewees, who lives in the second largest city of Sindh Province, expresses her view:

I think [the] attitude of neighbours and [the] community does matter in rural areas (villages/small towns), where people have strong social and cultural bonds. However, in cities, neighbours are less concerned with your work and personal life. (Agnes, 35, LA)

However, a few of the non-academic interviewees (4) observed bitter and disrespectful attitudes from their neighbours and community. These four non-academic interviewees, whose parents are engaged in the agriculture sector, were from rural areas. They also faced socio-cultural problems during their university education and are the first generation of women in their families and villages engaged in paid work. Therefore, the experiences of these women about the attitudes of their neighbours and community are categorically different from those of women living in the university society, or in urban areas. As already discussed above, people's socio-economic position and location have influence over their lives. Adele, a non-academic respondent from a rural area, who fought a lot for her university education (and then employment) has observed the bitter attitudes of her neighbours and community (village people). She says:

They (villagers) think women in paid work are characterless. They go out and, definitely, they have opportunities to meet people and do whatever they want. They think we [women in paid work] are not morally sound, and definitely have pre-marital and extra-marital sexual relationships. House women think we [professionals] are '*rol*' (characterless), and have no respect for our parents and our family values. (Adele, 35, Coordinator)

It is found that illiterate 'house women' are viewed by the interviewees as having negative perceptions about women who are engaged in paid work outside of the home. They are understood to have a robust internalisation of the patriarchal notions of 'good woman' and 'bad woman', and they perceive a woman's worth and respect in the context of these established patriarchal norms. As a result, women engaged in paid work are mostly labelled '*rol*' or '*gashti*⁴⁹' (as expressed by Adele). Therefore, women from the rural working community, who have entered the labour force because of economic necessity, feel that they face this type of attitude from their relatives, caste members and villagers. The findings demonstrated the significant role of institutionalised cultural, economic and symbolic capital in increasing women's status in the community. Emily and Adele both belong to Sindhi rural families, and both are the first generation in their families (and villages) to enter into employment. Both have faced strong opposition from their brothers regarding their education and employment. Emily, working as an

⁴⁹ The word '*gashti*', which literally means 'on the move', or 'roaming about', is often taken to mean a prostitute in the socio-cultural context of Pakistan.

associate professor, possesses a higher degree of cultural, economic and symbolic capital; hence, she received very positive attitudes from their neighbours (villagers). By contrast, Adele, working in a lower-ranking position, possesses weaker economic and symbolic capital; hence, she has not received the same appreciation and recognition.

From the above discussion, one might conclude that the overall societal attitude towards women in paid work is felt to be positive and supportive. In rural-based societies, working- class women's outside paid work is still not accepted though women's income/earning is welcomed by the family- which has changed the position of women in the society, as well as the economic position of the family. Participation of women in the labour force has widely changed the socio-cultural structures of family and society, which is being seen as a positive direction for women's employment and independence.

8.3.3. Social Recognition of Women's Paid Work

Pakistani women are living in a society that is highly stratified in its classes, castes, regions, sects and cultures; all these ramifications, whether positively or negatively, have influenced women's lives. For decades, a majority of women have been working in agriculture, but that work has less recognition- indeed; it is considered to be 'invisible' (Ibraz 1993). In the recent past, women's work on agricultural land has increased sufficiently because of young males' migrating to urban areas and abroad (particularly to the Gulf countries), as well as the growth of cotton production (Kazi 1999). Research also reveals that region is a more important determining factor for women's autonomy and mobility than religion (Jejeebhoy and Sathar 2001). This is why the socio-economic status of women is heterogeneous, and the recognition of women's paid work also varies from caste to caste, class to class and region to region (Sathar and Kazi 2000; Khawar and Shaheed 1987; Mumtaz 2007).

A great number of women have entered into paid work in the last two decades, but still, women's paid work has not received recognition on a larger scale, because of strict gendered ideologies and norms. Khattak (2001), researching women in selected formal and informal urban manufacturing sectors, finds that women's paid work has not significantly changed gender ideologies or gender roles, but gender discrimination in sending their children to schools is seen less with women in paid work. In this study, the perceptions and experiences of women concerning their paid work, as well societal perceptions (assumed to be negative) about women's paid work, were gathered. A huge number of respondents strongly supported women's higher-education, and their paid

work. Interestingly, they perceived their paid work receives recognition and appreciation in their families while they did not perceive similar kind of recognition in society. The reason behind this could be economic needs of the family, and increasing inflation. An Assistant Professor, who basically belongs to a landlord family and lived in Hyderabad for her education (primary to tertiary), emphasising women's paid work, says:

Nowadays, I think our society also accepts women's paid work, though not on a larger scale. In cities, most women are engaged in paid work, and it is recognised and appreciated, while in rural areas women work on agriculture land but that remains invisible, unrecognised and unappreciated. (Charlotte, 45, AP)

From interviews, it was concluded that acceptance and recognition of women's paid work vary from profession to profession, class to class, and urban to rural areas. The majority of interviewees were in support of women's employment; however, a few of the non-academics would prefer to be house women if the family's economic needs were met by male family members. Elite and landlord families still do not accept women's paid work in lower-ranking posts, however, there is high recognition of and appreciation for higher-ranking positions (such as doctors, bureaucrats, and university teachers). This illustrates the necessity of paying attention to how gender intersects with other aspects of social identity. In lower middle classes (in cities), women's employment is highly accepted and appreciated, while there was a perception that in rural areas, women's paid work has not yet gained acceptance (except work on agricultural land).

Interestingly, most of the participants of this study, being Sindhi and having strong rural connections (patriarchal), also perceived the acceptance of women's paid work- but not on the larger scale as seen with Urdu-speaking people, who are settled in urban localities. A Sindhi Associate Professor, talking about the recognition of women's paid work and a shift in patriarchal norms regarding women's work and employment in society in general (and in family in particular), says:

Nowadays, there is a positive change, and women's paid work is not considered as 'taboo'; even women in media are not considered bad, and society respects and recognizes women's paid work. The chain of patriarchy is still there, but now women have started to resist it; because of education and awareness they cannot remain silent anymore: that is why they have got some immunity. Men have not changed at all, but women have become stronger; now, they have started questioning and resisting. (Camilla, 45, Assoc. P.)

The above quote highlights that the findings do not mean all men are supportive to women's paid work, but due to the rapid social change and feminisation of the labour market women have been provided with employment opportunities. As the result, women in paid work have become economically sound, and are in a bargaining position. It was noticed from the analysis of in-depth interviews that Sindhi society has undergone major changes in family patterns from patriarchal to egalitarian. However, this shift in family norms and in patriarchal norms, classical to bargaining patriarchy (Kandiyoti 1988) varies from class to class, caste to caste and region to region, it has left a positive impact on women's education and employment. The research findings also reveal that men have not completely moved away from that patriarchal approach, but women have a voice because of education and awareness, and they have started questioning and arguing, which has resulted in some benefits for women.

The perception of non-academic participants about women's paid work differed from that of academic participants. Some of them highly supported women's paid work, and also perceived a great acceptance and recognition of women's employment in the family. However, a few of them considered 'home' as the best place for women, and placed emphasis on women's 'mothering role' instead of as breadwinner. A sufficient number of non-academic participants considered that a woman's primary responsibility is her family and children; if her husband's earning is sufficient, then she should not engage herself in paid work. This is reflected in the quote below:

I think our society has changed enough, and it accepts and appreciates women's paid work. However, there are many families and castes in Sindh who feel dishonour or shame on daughter's earning and contribution. To me the best place for women is family and home, children need mother's care. If husband earns sufficient then she should not work, she must give a proper time to family and children. In case of poor economic conditions of family she must do job for the wellbeing of her family and children. (Agnes, 35, LA)

It is concluded from the interviews a cultural notion 'home is the best place for women' still predominantly exists in professional women particularly in the lower middle class. On the one hand they are in support of women's paid work, on the other hand, they support women's reproductive and motherly role in the family. The reason behind this is the dominant role of man as 'head of family' and his minimal or no involvement in household work. He thinks housework (cooking, cleaning, caring for children and washing) is the primary responsibility of the woman. Additionally, non-academic women, working in lower-ranking positions, hold weaker symbolic capital and social

status in the community, hence they see 'home' as women's best place. On the other hand, academic women working in higher-ranking positions possess higher cultural, economic and symbolic capital, hence, they perceive more appreciation and support for women's employment even in economically comfortable families.

The third category of non-academic interviews was of those who belonged to poor rural traditional families, who received support from parents but faced harsh attitudes from their brothers and members of the same caste. Their experiences of getting through university education and paid work were acrimonious. They perceived society as male dominated which controls women and degrades the social status of women in society, as one of the non-academic interviewees illustrates below:

Generally, our society does not recognize women's paid work and considers women in paid work 'bad'. There is a perception that they are educated, engaged in paid work, so they have physical mobility, thus they violate the family traditions and moral values. As they are educated hence, they are aware of their rights, and they want to live an independent life and society is not ready to see all that. (Adele, 40, Coordinator)

From the above discussion, it is concluded that there is a dominant perception that women's best place is 'family and home' (Ibraz 1993; Shah 2002) though there is a huge change in societal structure and family patterns (Ferdoos 2005). Nowadays, women's education and paid work are encouraged and appreciated within families, though the family sustains outer pressure. Generally, the sexuality of women in paid work comes under discussion from colleagues, in the workplace and in the community, which shakes the honour of women, as well as the family (Naveed 1998; Saeed 2004, 2012).

8.3.4. Perception of Patriarchy and Male Dominance

Sindhi society is male-dominated, and the Sindhi- mainly in rural areas- are more sensitive to women's image and identity in the public spheres. Particularly in rural areas, they are hesitant to use the names of their women in public spheres. Culturally, taking names of women family members into public spheres is considered a matter of shame and dishonour. Even a husband does not call her (wife) by her name (and vice versa)⁵⁰; however, it is changing in the younger, educated generation. The reason behind

⁵⁰This practice still predominantly exists in rural areas, and to some extent in Sindhi families settled in urban areas of Sindh, where spouses do not address each other by their names. They use some particular traditional words such as; '*hedhanhn*' (hey), or '*hedhanhn Budh*' (hey listen!). In some, cases they call each other by their son's name, for instance, "*Ahmed jee Maa*" means "Ahmed's mother" or "*Ahmed ja Piyo*" means "Ahmed's father". Furthermore, young women do not use the names of their male elders,

such practices and customs is ‘family honour’, which is linked to women’s sexuality and bodies (Bhanbhro et al 2013). By contrast, these traditional practices and customs have changed significantly in urban-based educated Sindhi families (Ferdoos 2005). Interviewees shared that perceptions about women’s role in the community, girls’ education and employment, and understanding of gender discrimination are changing in urban areas, though practices of male dominance are rife and the ultimate authority is male (father/brother/husband), even in the middle and elite classes. However, the notion of ‘man as ultimate authority or head of the family’ in the urban-based upper and middle groups does not represent the prevailing traditional patriarchal societies, such as rural Sindhi society. Urban-based middle class women generally do not make such decisions that might destabilise their marriages or families. Instead, they engage in forms of bargaining which keep intact the public image of the husband’s breadwinning role and that of family head, and they seek to increase their ‘backstage’ influence in decision-making processes (Kabeer 2000).

Generally, research participants’- whether academic or non-academic- perceptions regarding patriarchy and male dominance in Sindhi society confirms that it is male-dominated. Participants of this study were from three different socio-economic classes, i.e. upper-middle class, middle class and lower-middle class. The majority of the academic interviewees were from upper and middle classes while the majority of non-academic interviewees were from lower middle classes. However, a few of the non-academic participants were also from upper or middle classes, and working in higher-ranking positions. Therefore, the perceptions of participants- whether academic or non-academic- about patriarchy and male dominance in family/community and in society were found to be heterogeneous.

Variations in the perceptions of women about patriarchy, the nature of patriarchy and the magnitude of patriarchy, and male dominance practices were witnessed throughout the in-depth interviews. Upper middle-class urban-based women, whether academic or non-academic, perceive patriarchy as an abstraction in their families and in the community; however; they shared the belief that Sindhi society, in general, is male dominated and, of course, women are not given status equal to that of men (Ferdoos 2005; Shah 2002). Participants from the middle classes perceived the existence of

they call them with title of relationship, for example the word *Ada* (for brother or brother in-law), and word "*baba*" (for father or father in-law). They are obliged to show the same respect to the elder women as well.

patriarchy and male dominance, but it is losing ground or changing from classic patriarchy to bargaining patriarchy. By contrast, participants from both the academic and non-academic groups in the lower-middle class (working class), who have an affiliation with their extended families back in rural Sindh (village) perceived that they are struggling for emancipation while living under the chain of traditional patriarchy.

8.3.4.1. *Male dominance/patriarchy as a concept*

Women from educated urban-based families (elite class), who possess higher cultural, economic and symbolic capitals (Bourdieu 1986), perceive patriarchy and male dominance as a ‘concept’ not existing in practice in families and in their surroundings. Such perceptions about patriarchy and male dominance are seen in upper-middle class, urban-based families. They have been living in urban areas since Pakistan gained independence in 1947, and have had no agrarian background for last three or more generations. They are the third generation of women in their families engaged in employment, hence, they possess higher symbolic capital. Additionally, these women are more religious (practicing Muslims) compared to middle and lower class women, and they agree that the head of the family must be a man, as he is ‘protector’ or ‘guardian’ according to Islam. Therefore, they perceive patriarchy and male dominance as a local cultural practice, and Islam does not support this practice. However, Islam (reformist approach) has given equal status to women and has defined certain roles for men and women. Man’s role as protector or head of the house is one of these assigned roles, as one of the academic interviewees illustrates:

Islam is a religion of peace and equality. God has made men and women equal, though God has made him head of [the] family. Therefore, he is responsible for protecting the family and women. It does not mean he is a patriarch and dictates to the family and women. In my family, we make all decisions mutually; even I have seen the same culture in my community. Protecting and looking after women by their men is an Islamic code and both should follow it. (Isabella, 43, AP).

It was observed that elite and upper class female participants have many monetary privileges and advantages (economic capital). They also have greater physical mobility and social networking (social capital) in their own class or community, they have not observed any kind of social pressure or restrictions within or outside of the family regarding their employment and physical mobility (Ferdoos 2005; Sathar and Kazi 2000; Alavi 1988). They, being professional women from elite and upper-middle classes, did not challenge the patriarchal structures (Rashid 2011), but instead

developed a somewhat compatible co-existence and established values and norms regarding their employment, autonomy and independence within the class structure. Thus, consciously or unconsciously supporting the patriarchal structure, they have experienced autonomy and independence by having more monetary advantages and privileges than their fellow women (Rashid 2011, 2008). As Rashid (2011) argues, elite and upper class feminists and political workers have focused on legal rights for women rather than challenging the gender ideologies and socio-religious structures in Pakistan.

Simultaneously, by being the privileged class in society, they have portrayed themselves as moderate Muslims (good Muslims), and emphasis is placed on the teachings and principles of Islam, rather than traditional local interpretations of Islam and local customs and practices. To them, Islam is the only religion which has bestowed women with equal rights to men. Thus, indirectly, patriarchal structures are reinforced by Islamic principles, and in this class (elite/upper class), patriarchy has extended and become more modernized as a locus, while still retaining male domination (Sathar and Kazi 2000; Ferdoos 2005).

It was witnessed that, similar to a socio-economic class, the socialisation of girls within the family plays an important role, and has an influence on their perceptions regarding male dominance and patriarchy. One of the non-academic participants from the upper-middle class, whose grandmother was a primary teacher and whose mother and mother-in-law are also higher secondary school teachers, perceived the dominating role of women in family decisions, as follows:

I do not think urban-based Sindhi society is any more male dominated. Nowadays it [male-dominance] is just a concept. I have not felt that [I] am living in a male dominated society. I think it depends on the background of your family and socialisation. Now, women are dominating family decisions, and they even decide about life partners of their kids; the role of grandmother or mother is very important here. (Alana, 40, CP)

8.3.4.2. *Patriarchy losing ground/shifting*

The second category of research participants was those who belong to the educated middle class, but have a rural background. They have a strong social bond and affiliation with their joint family back in the village. They are the first generation who acquired an education and migrated to the urban areas for better job opportunities and living standards. They benefit in terms of cultural and economic capital (Reay 2004; Lin 2001), but they could not convert it into symbolic capital because of the strong legacy

of rural based kinship. Hence, they perceive patriarchy and male dominance completely differently from urban-based, upper-middle class women. From the perspective of these women, no doubt, the socio-cultural norms and notions regarding women's participation in economic and political activities are changing in the province of Sindh, and women are gaining emancipation from the chain of patriarchy, but still- Sindhi society is in a transitional phase (Tabassum 2011; Isran and Isran 2012). There is also a shift in family structure; for instance, from joint family to nuclear or semi-nuclear family in Sindhi society (Hussain 2008; Ferdoos 2005). This shift has definitely given some advantage to women in terms of their education and employment; however, this positive shift has not changed the minds of men with regard to women's independence. One of the academic interviewees acknowledges a shift in gendered roles within the family, and the involvement of women in family decisions and economic activities. She expresses her experiences of patriarchy and male dominance thus:

Male dominance is a mindset of our society; even we educated and professional women do ask man about his will and wish. Our society is [a] rural-based patriarchal society, and we [spouse] have a rural background. Though he [husband] is broadminded, liberal but I, keeping all things in mind and for the sake of my own smooth life, ask him rather than taking my own decisions. He never ever prohibited me... but I do agree that it is [a] male-dominating society, and he is the final authority. (Kate, 55, Professor)

This category of participants perceived patriarchy and male dominance as a mindset of Sindhi society, which has enforced our males to internalise the norms of controlling women, and the practice of respectability or family honour that is linked to women's bodies (Rashid 2008). They perceived very complicated family patterns in the middle classes, which, on the one hand, have accepted women's higher education and employment.

On the other hand, however, women are expected to follow the established norms, and prove themselves as 'good women/mothers'—a patriarchal notion of traditional society for women. They have a rural-based, traditional family legacy that asserts the protecting role of man and his control over women while their current positions—in the urban-based middle classes—place demand on gender equality, and women's roles out of the home.

Therefore, in such in-between situations, they (men and women) are always in a negotiating and accommodating position, as Kate further illustrates:

You know our (Sindhi) family's structure is very complicated and extended, so here in my immediate family we make all decisions mutually, but I will say he [husband] is basically from rural Sindh (village), and has a first wife living in an extended family, so he does not share his parental family matters with me, and does not allow me to intervene...and I also don't interfere in his parental family matters. (Kate, 55, Professor)

Kate, being a second wife and living in a city away from her husband's parental family in the village, enjoys more rights compared to his first wife, who lives in a village. She has privileges over her husband in terms of professional position (symbolic capital) and economic capital, and they make decisions mutually in their immediate family, but she always defers to her husband before making any decision. It was concluded from the analysis of the interview that there is a sense of fear amongst professional women about their marital life; hence, for their own peace of mind in marital life, they prefer to seek their husbands' permission—which could be just information—to avoid conflict within their relationships, like that of Kate.

Secondly, still the notion of man 'as protector' of the family is predominant, and men consider themselves responsible for protecting and upholding the society's traditions and morality, which are linked to women's sexuality. Therefore, controlling women's sexual activity, showing a deep distrust of women, and keeping an eye on one's sister's and wife's physical movements are considered very important. It was witnessed that parents decide their daughters' course of education, and then also define or choose employment sectors where women can work while remaining within the defined boundaries outlined by their parents (and society in general). This is reflected in the quote below:

I have heard from my girl students that their parents are not willing to allow them to [do] work in which there is fieldwork, or frequent interaction with men. I have also observed here many of my female colleagues just attend their lectures/seminars and they do not take part in extra-curriculum activities, functions, social gathering, even they do not do counselling of their own students. They keep themselves reserved and their male family members mostly the husband gives pick and drop facilities to them. (Diana, 36, AP)

8.3.4.3. *Classic patriarchy*

Already discussed in the chapter literature review was the fact that that Pakistan is predominantly a rural society; therefore, mainly Pakistani society can be defined as a 'classic patriarchy' (Kandiyoti 1988, p. 274). However, it has also been observed that there is a clear dividing line between highly patriarchal rural areas and urban perspectives where gender and family relations are more egalitarian (Moghadam 1993,

p. 109). This division of patriarchy was also witnessed from the perceptions of the interviewees of this study regarding patriarchy and male dominance in society. As discussed above, the interviewees were from different classes and family backgrounds. Hence, their perceptions of patriarchy and male dominance were heterogeneous; i.e. from stronger patriarchy to intangible patriarchal structures. Those who have extended family with rural backgrounds perceived stronger patriarchal structures, and faced resistance within the family- mainly from their husbands or brothers- against their higher education and employment. This is how a divorcee and mother of three children perceives Sindhi society as a 'classic patriarchy', where men control and dictate women's lives:

Man lives his independent life, but he is not ready to allow his sister or wife to live the same life. He always controls the woman and wants to dictate to her according to his will and wish. I faced this attitude (physical violence) after my marriage. He forbade me from doing a job outside and used to say he cannot tolerate my interactions with other people, and they talk about me in [the] public sphere. I, being educated and employed, could not tolerate this, and obtained a divorce through the court. (Susan, 40, A)

Extended family and extended kinship settlements are the prevailing structure of rural society, where kin group members maintain their houses close to each other. Therefore, villages are mostly comprised of extended family, and almost the entire population of the village in some way or other are relatives or from the same caste, as most of the villages are comprised of just one or two castes (Sathar and Kazi 2000; Mumtaz and Salway 2009).

In such settlements, women's physical mobility is accepted within the extended kin or village; however, extended kinship and caste discourage women's participation in activities outside of the home. Therefore, a majority of women from this class are engaged in low-ranking positions, and are discouraged from competing with men through their upbringing and explicit discrimination-which they have to confront within the family, caste and the job market. Thus, women from such socio-cultural settings who are engaged in paid work, and their parents, face social pressure from their extended kin and caste regarding the honour of their family and kinship. As one of the non-academic interviewees reflects:

There is no doubt that our society is male-dominated, and women are controlled by men in almost all walks of life. A woman only can work outside with the support of her family; otherwise, she cannot. My parents and husband support

my employment, though they faced social pressure from our caste and community by passing comments i.e. '*chhori karo munhn karaindey*⁵¹'. (Nicola, 40, LA)

Women from rural backgrounds perceived classic patriarchy and male dominance, which is being maintained through the extended kinship and caste. In such extended settlements, members of extended kin groups and castes would criticize a woman for having paid employment, because she might become too independent, forget her actual status (motherhood) within the family and threat to moral values and traditions of caste (Hafeez and Ahmad 2002). Thus, women in paid work and their families face social pressure, created by extended kinship and caste. This social pressure is in the form of character assassination for a woman in paid work and her family, which then further results in defamation of the extended kinship and caste. Therefore, in such circumstances, men may prefer to control women's freedom of mobility to avoid such defamation in the society.

8.4. Conclusion

This chapter explored the themes of women's social status in the community and their perceptions of the social attitudes of others. It is reported that 'togetherness' is the essence of Sindhi society, and women are identified by their caste, father's name, and finally her own name. Such order of an individual's social identity creates a sense of interconnectedness and interdependence among family members that operates at two levels: binding the individual to family; and families to *biradari* (kinship) (Mumtaz and Salway 2009). This chapter argues that women's social status is heterogeneous within the household, and in the community in general. It further argues that intersectional social categories, such as women's residence, family structure, marital status, ethnicity, caste and socio-economic status have a significant influence on women's social status. The chapter suggested the significant role of cultural, economic and symbolic capital in increasing women's social status and position in their communities.

Overall, the research participants perceived and experienced 'increased social status' in the community because of their profession (teaching) and working with a university. However, this is highly influenced by participants' family, caste and region, as Barbara's story reveals. It was also observed that participants perceived recognition of

⁵¹ The literal meaning of the phrase is 'getting one's face black', but in the Sindhi cultural context, it is used to describe a woman having illicit sexual relationship with someone. The phrase is also used for other such acts (especially by women) which are culturally considered 'shameful acts', and bring dishonour to the family and caste.

their paid work within the household and in the community, and they believed that their families felt proud of their professional role. The chapter also argues that the type of professional position held, and the perceived 'nature' of a profession affect women's social status within the household and in the community in general.

Women perceived and experienced patriarchy differently to one another, and their perception of its influence on women varies because of the intersectionality of other social categories such as family, caste, class, ethnicity and region. For example, participants belonging to the upper and middle classes, and well-settled in urban areas, perceived transformation within the patriarchy. To them, it is more of an abstract concept for the elite and upper-middle class than the realities that exist in rural areas of Sindh. On the other hand, those who belong to rural families or the lower-middle class, and who are the first female generation in their families to enter paid employment perceived 'classic patriarchy', with only slight changes in its mode of operation. However, there is an agreement in the view of research participants that Sindhi society is patriarchal and male-dominated in its socio-cultural and socio-political characteristics, and women apply various strategies to negotiate for their maximum security and life options- as Kandiyoti (1988) termed this: 'patriarchal bargaining'.

The following chapter focuses on findings related to women's perceptions about autonomy and independence.

Chapter Nine: Experience of Autonomy & Independence

9.1. Introduction

The discussion in this chapter significantly analyses the perceptions and experiences of women's autonomy, while considering the presumption that women's higher-education and gainful employment raises the level of women's autonomy, independence and social status within the household, and in society in general.

Thus, the chapter discusses the extent to which these professional women perceived themselves as being independent and autonomous within and outside of the household. Higher-education and the better employment of these women are used as exploratory variables, as higher-education and employment have been studied as the key indicators for women's autonomy and status in gender studies (e. g., Sridevi 2005; Kabeer 2001; Ghazala and Khalid 2012). Most studies on women's autonomy, empowerment, and status in the context of South Asia are quantitative, and have used interrelated items or indices to measure autonomy (e.g., Mishra 2014; Acharya et al 2010; Jejeebhoy and Sathar 2001; Sathar and Kazi 2000,1990). In contrast with previous studies, this is a qualitative study, which does not focus on measuring autonomy, but captures professional women's perceptions and experiences of autonomy and independence, and the meaning they attach to these concepts from an ethnographic perspective.

9.2. Perception and Experience of Autonomy

Universally, there is not any agreed-upon standard for measuring women's autonomy as it is a multidimensional concept and perceived differently in various societies because of variations in socio-political structure, socio-culture patterns, living standards, family patterns, and economic wellbeing (Malhotra and Schuler 2002). Most researchers have used similar or interrelated variables for measuring women's autonomy and empowerment, while ignoring the cultural specificity and the strong emotional and structural bonds between men and women (Mumtaz and Salway 2009). Malhotra and Schuler (2002) report that most studies on gender development and women's empowerment or autonomy have used quantitative methodologies, and attention has been given to variables such as women's age, age differences between husband and wife, women's education and employment, and family patterns. Some studies (i.e. Rahman et al 2008; Kabeer 2001; Mason 1998; Hashemi, Schuler and Riley 1996) consider women's empowerment as a multidimensional concept, and they study various dimensions such as women's role in decision-making; women's physical mobility or

social participation; women's access to and control over resources; and control over health and matters related to family planning. Sridevi (2005), studying the status of female Postgraduate teachers in Chennai (India), identified five dimensions for measuring women's autonomy or empowerment, which are: control over personal income; maintenance of family income; supporting the natal family; expenditure on education of children; and financial decisions about healthcare. Similarly, Jejeebhoy and Sathar (2001), in their study on two neighbouring countries (India and Pakistan), used four dimensions to measure women's autonomy: economic decision-making ability; spatial mobility; freedom from threat; and control over economic resources. Past research on women's autonomy, status and empowerment (e.g., Rahman et al 2008; Kabeer 2001; Mason 1998; Hashemi, Schuler and Riley 1996; Sridevi 2005; Jejeebhoy and Sathar 2001; Sathar and Kazi 2000; Thapa and Niehof 2013) guided me towards a deep analysis and interpretation of professional women's experiences of autonomy.

The interview data reveals that the term 'autonomy' is a broad concept, which has been viewed differently amongst the research participants. The meaning these professional women attach to the concept of autonomy is categorically different from the one that originates from the West (particularly in the USA), which supports individualism. In the context of a collectivist society like Pakistan, where there is a central idea of the group's interest taking precedence over self-interest, these professional women value family interests over personal interests (Mines 1994), and search for their autonomy, equality, independence and individuality within their groups (family and caste).

In a South Asian context, the words *azad* ('free') or *mukhtiyar* ('independent') refer to having control or authority to act as a free agent, but when applied to women, their positive connotations changes to negative ones, such as *besharm* ('immodest and shameless') (Jeffery and Jeffery 1996, p. 181). In the South Asian context, *azadi* ('freedom') is negatively valued, being associated with 'loose women' rather than fulfilment (Jeffery and Basu 1996, p. 25). These women used the word *zimmadar* ('responsible') to describe their being in a decision-making position. Thus, these professional women were reluctant to call themselves *azad* (free) or *mukhtiyar* (autonomous or independent); as Jeffery and Jeffery (1996, p. 181) suggest, '...that which we may want to label 'autonomy' may not be valorised by women because it seems unattractive and frightening'.

Thus, the findings report that these professional women have autonomy, though of a type which is categorised as ‘bounded-autonomy’ or ‘limited autonomy’- such as access to financial resources. Because Sindhi society is collectivist, like other South Asian societies, and these professional women are aware of that, their personal interests are strongly vested in their families, and togetherness, interconnectedness or interdependency is viewed as a form of social insurance by these women (Mumtaz and Salway 2009). For example, to some participants, having control over resources means that they are autonomous, even though they have limited freedom to physical mobility. On the other hand, others consider ‘participation in decision-making processes’ as their autonomy, though they may have little to control over economic resources.

The variation in the perceptions of these professional women regarding their autonomy reveals the challenges faced when attempting to use the notion of women’s autonomy to understand gendered structures and inequalities in the province of Sindh. There is variation in the conceptualisation of autonomy (Sathar and Kazi 2000), and there is no universal notion of autonomy.

9.3. Decision-making autonomy

Women’s participation in decision-making in general, and within the household in particular, is considered one of the potential indicators for measuring women’s status, autonomy and empowerment in gender studies. Various research (i.e., jejeebhoy and Sathar 2001; Sathar and Kazi 2000, 1997) on women’s autonomy in the context of Pakistan have employed participation in decision-making as a major parameter to assess women’s status and autonomy. Women’s participation in decision-making processes- particularly in the household- has emerged as one of the key themes from the interview data. The interviews indicate that women’s university education has woken them up to their rights, and they have asserted more involvement in household decision-making.

This assertion is also supplemented by the survey data, which reveals that 86 percent and 80 percent of academic and non-academic respondents respectively are of the opinion that university education increases women’s participation in household decision-making. 76 percent and 80 percent of academic and non-academic respondents respectively thought that employment increases women’s participation in household decisions. Interview participants shared that their higher-education has brought about phenomenal changes in their lives by: enhancing their self-confidence, self-esteem and self-worth; raising up their efficacy; providing better career opportunities; allowing for

better upbringing of their children; enhancing their mobility; and raising their status and autonomy in the family and in society (see also Ghazala and Khalid 2012). Employment has provided them with better status, and an autonomous position within the household, by reducing their economic dependency. However, their economic independence has created tensions with elder male family members in general, and with husbands and mothers-in-law in particular. In patriarchal societies, women's independence or liberty is considered differently from men's, and can bring dishonour to their families within their communities. Women's autonomous but different position within the household and outside of it is related to the domestic violence, including in its verbal and psychological forms (Gangoli 2007, Salway and Mumtaz 2009). Sindhi society still expects from a woman to be primarily responsible for rearing and caring of children rather than their greater role in society, though she is engaged in paid-work. Therefore, such type of expectation or obligation denies a woman's autonomous position in society; however, she may have an equal say in household decisions. This is why many South Asian feminists (Gangoli 2007; Menon 2009; Roy 2009; Srinivasan and Bedi 2007) have linked women's autonomy to domestic violence and the issue of domestic violence has been a major element of campaigns by South Asian feminists in general and Pak-Indian feminists in particular (Gangoli 2007; Roy 2009).

Findings suggest that higher-education strengthens a person's skills and capacity, which further increases the chances of better-skilled and socially acceptable employment opportunities for women. Employment is seen to have a crucial role in increasing women's participation in decision-making within the household, and in the community in general. However, the level of women's decision-making and acceptance of decisions made is heterogeneous. Further, the qualitative analysis suggests that women's participation in decision-making processes can be affected by intersecting social categories such as women's age, marital status, family structure, caste, social class, ethnicity and residence.

9.3.1. Women's marital status and participation in household decisions

Past research in South Asia (e.g., Vlassoff 1992; Dyson and Moore 1983; Caldwell 1982), particularly in the rural context of Pakistan (Sathar and Kazi 2000), which found a woman's age had an influence on her autonomy; however, this study suggests the influence of women's marital status on their autonomy, particularly in household decision-making. Results of the in-depth interviews have also found a variation in the

perception of interviewees regarding their decision-making autonomy. Married women have greater decision-making autonomy in the household than unmarried women from the same social class or background. They experienced practices of mutual decision-making within their households.

However, unmarried interviewees' experiences of participation in decision-making within the family were different from those of married interviewees of the same social class background. They experienced less participation in household decision-making than married women living either in joint or nuclear/semi-nuclear families. One reason for their lesser say or involvement in household decision-making is the cultural notion that a woman's real home is her husband's home while she is a 'guest' in her parental family (Bari 1991). This type of cultural notion and women's socialisation may have influenced the personality of professional women, and they prefer to keep themselves outside of parental family matters and decisions. Secondly, cultural preference of the son as the inheritor and the head of the family is the major reason behind daughters' lesser participation in parental family decisions. Culturally, the participation of women particularly- participation of daughters in family matters- is considered as going against the honour of the family- specifically, in rural areas. One of the unmarried non-academic interviewees shares:

It is true that I am not consulted in household decisions and I have no say in household decisions, because in our rural-based Sindhi family daughters are not involved in family matters; culturally, it is considered against the honour of the family. However, I am independent in my own decisions, as I am not married while my younger, uneducated sister got married as arranged by our parents. (Adele, 40. Coordinator)

The positive influence of Adele's cultural capital (higher educational qualifications and training) and economic capital (employment) on her decision-making abilities is witnessed in her above statement. However, her increased decision-making ability is about her personal decisions; for instance, doing a job, choice of life partner etc. but not about parental family matters/decisions. She considers herself independent in her own decisions- for example; selection of life partner; choice of occupation and career development etc. - but she complains that she is not consulted in her parental family decisions. However, the positive influence of women's cultural and economic capital on their participation in decision-making depends upon other intersecting social factors-

for example, women's marital status, parental family patterns, caste or *biradari*, and rural background.

In contrast to married and unmarried participants, widows or separated women (either living with their parents or in separate houses) perceived themselves to be more autonomous in decision-making. They are the sole decision-makers in their respective families. A widow and mother of three, living with her parents, shares her experience:

I live with my elderly parents, and they are economically dependent on me. I am independent, and in fact, I am the head of my [parental] family. My elderly father (uneducated) always asks my mom to seek my opinion, as he thinks I [being university educated and working in the university] know things the better way. (Agnes, 35, LA)

The above quote reveals that a woman's cultural and economic capitals are stronger predictors of her autonomy and empowerment when she is largely responsible for the family's economic provisions. In such circumstances, gendered relations, culture, caste and social background have a lesser influence over her life, as Agnes considers herself not only independent but also head of the family. Poor women's caste (either higher or lower), converging with their poverty, forced them to work outside the home, and enhanced their greater participation in decision-making and mobility (Mumtaz and Salway 2009).

9.3.2. Women's family patterns and participation in household decisions

The impact of family structure (joint/extended, nuclear or semi-nuclear) on women's decision-making autonomy has been noticed in this study, similar to in the previous study (Sathar and Kazi 2000) conducted in the rural context of Pakistan. The province of Sindh has witnessed a process of rapid industrialisation and urbanisation, and substantial changes in economic and social development. As studies have suggested, these substantial changes may have an important impact on the family structure, gender relations within the household (Ferrer 1990), and women's position in family income (Wolf 1992). Similarly, impacts of the substantial changes brought about by economic and social development have been observed in the province of Sindh, where the nuclear and semi-nuclear family structure is emerging, and women's higher education and employment is being socially accepted and welcomed, though not on a wider scale (Ferdoos 2005).

Participants belonging to nuclear or semi-nuclear families are more likely to have higher levels of decision-making autonomy than those living in a joint family. Interview data

seems to support the argument (Ferdoos 2005) that family patterns in urban Sindh have gone through a significant change, and women are participating in household decision-making. On the other hand, it has been observed that these professional women accept that the final decision-making authority is the man. This type of acceptance reveals that these professional women have also internalised cultural and religious norms, which support man's being 'head of the family'. Sindhi society is predominantly male-dominated; hence, the notion of 'man as final authority' also exists in urban-based nuclear families, but in urban-based Sindhi middle-class families, decisions are made mutually, as one of the academic interviewees reflects:

As we are [an] urban-based family, and I think most decisions are [made] mutually in the urban based-educated family, my husband and I share everything- including family or our career- and then decide. Thus, our decisions are collective, and based on consultation, but man is the final authority in our society. (Christina, 45, AP)

On the other hand, participants living in nuclear or semi-nuclear families, but with a legacy of a rural-patriarchal background based on extended kinship, caste, and tribal settings, also have a say within their immediate families. However, they have no participation in major decisions-making, and still have lesser recognition and acceptance in family decision-making compared to their counterparts who belong to urban-based nuclear families. Further, the ability of women to take part in decision-making processes is dependent on the type of decision that is being made.

You know our [Sindhi] family structure is very complicated and extended. My husband is already married and she [his first wife] lives in his village with his parents' family, while I live here in Hyderabad. In our immediate family, we make all decisions with mutual consultation and understanding, and mostly I make decisions and he agrees. However, I am not hesitant to say that he is from a rural area and being the elder, he is the head of his parental joint family. So being the head, he does not share his parental family matters with me. (Kate, 55, Professor)

It is argued that Islam does not favour polygamy, and did not introduce the practice of polygamy (Mashhour 2005). Pakistan, being an Islamic country religiously and legally⁵², allows polygamy, and it has a cultural acceptance amongst Muslims. In spite

⁵² Muslim Family Law Ordinance 1961 (MFLO), which regulates family matters i.e. registration of marriage, divorce and polygamy, legally permits a Muslim man to keep more than one wife at a time. According to the MFLO, every marriage shall be registered, and husband must seek permission from his wife or wives before a second marriage, by giving application to the Chairman of Union Council. Upon receipt of the application, the Chairman shall ask the applicant and his wife or wives to each nominate a representative to establish the Arbitration Council. The Arbitration Council, if satisfied that the proposed marriage is necessary, grants the permission applied for marriage.

of that, polygamy is not a common practice in the province of Sindh; however, it is seen that landlords, *Pirs*⁵³, and politicians have more than one wife. A tendency to marry an educated professional woman as ‘second wife’ was also noticed in the Sindh middle class, whereby educated men- who were married to their illiterate cousin or close blood relative at a young age- prefer to marry an educated professional woman.

Kate’s husband, belonging to Upper Sindh (Khairpur), also had a first marriage to his illiterate cousin, while his second marriage was to Kate, a woman who belongs to an educated family from Lower Sindh (Hyderabad). Hence, the couple has different familial, educational, and regional backgrounds. Kate’s experience of autonomy and status is complex. On the one hand, she exercises all powers within her immediate family⁵⁴, and outside as well, in addition to which, she owns a house and a car. On the other hand, she does not have any kind of participation in decision-making with her in-laws. Such a wide level of difference in women’s status is seen in those families whose first generation of men have obtained white-collar employment, and whose women have still not achieved entry into higher education and employment. Kate’s experience reflects the influence of region and family patterns over women’s status and autonomy (Jejeebhoy and Sathar 2001).

Similarly, one of the academic participants, living in a nuclear family (but whose husband has a joint family back in the village), has perceived greater decision-making autonomy in her immediate family, but not equal to that of her husband. As she expresses:

I have an equal say in decision-making in my immediate family. We make all decisions mutually. I am consulted in family matters, I can suggest but I cannot decide. My husband asks me for the suggestion, sometimes he appreciates my suggestion and sometimes does not, but finally he makes all decisions. (Caroline, 42, AP)

Caroline’s perception of her equal say in household decision-making suggests that her understanding of the concept ‘equality’ is that of ‘limited-equality’ or ‘limited autonomy’ (Sathar and Kazi 2000). She understood and attached meaning to the concept

⁵³ In Pakistan, the term *Pir* is used for ‘spiritual guide, Holy man, and wielder of spiritual power and blessing’ (Hassan and Kamal 2010), while its real meaning in Persian is ‘old man’ or ‘respected elder’ (Ewing 1983).

⁵⁴ She lives with her two unmarried children in the second largest city in the province of Sindh, while her husband has already a first wife who lives in village. Therefore, ‘immediate family’ refers to her and her two unmarried children.

of equality in the context of her local culture, which stresses collectivity and togetherness, rather than in the Western sense of equality, in which the individual is judged against the notion of an independent, self-contained agent, and valued equally in law, and in a dominant ethos that supports individualism (Mines (1994, p. 150). Having consultation in family matters, to her, means ‘equality’ and equal say; however, she acknowledges that the final authority is her husband⁵⁵. Caroline’s perception of her equal participation in household decision-making indicates that professional Pakistani women actually share decision-making with husband (particularly in nuclear families), but they claim ultimate deferral as a means of maintaining family honour and perceived cultural expectations and obligations (Bari 2000; Bhanbhro et al 2013; Ferdoos 2005). In this cultural context, these professional women’s claim that the ‘ultimate authority is the male/husband’ seems more ritualistic/ceremonial rather than realistic. The ultimate authority of men is a prominent norm of traditional or patriarchal society, which defines women’s role primarily within the arena of home as mothers and wives, and defines men as the breadwinners (Guney et al 2006; Ibraiz 1993).

Kate and Caroline’s experiences of their decision-making autonomy reflect the influence of family structure and the legacy of a rural background, which is male-dominated (Tabassum 2011), on these professional women’s lives. However, a positive change has been seen in the family patterns of Sindhi society, and women have their involvement in household decisions and economic activities, though not to the same degree as their counterparts belonging to nuclear families, based in urban areas (Ferdoos 2005). Thus, Kate and Caroline’s cultural and economic capitals have a significant impact on their decision-making abilities. They both- through living in harmony with others (the husband and his family), and accepting the man as the ultimate authority in the family- have strategically used their cultural and economic capitals for their maximum social security and mutuality in family decision-making. Thus, these professional women may have used the ‘ultimate authority is male’ as their strategy for not only keeping their lives harmonious but for maintaining and regulating family honour and other expectations regarding women’s modesty and purity (Bari 2000; Bhanbhro et al 2013).

⁵⁵ Caroline’s parents were from Upper Sindh (Shikarpur) and migrated to Hyderabad, thus she was brought up in Hyderabad, the second largest city of Sindh, while her husband’s family still lives in Shikarpur, Upper Sindh. Thus, the family patterns and norms of the couple’s parental families are different, and have effects on their socialisation.

9.3.3. Women's ethnicity and participation in household decisions

It is also observed that ethnicity has a significant influence on women's participation in household decisions. *Muhajir* participants' perceptions of their participation in household decisions are very positive compared to either urban-based or rural-based Sindhi professional women. *Muhajir* participants' parents are educated and settled in urban areas; hence, they are encouraged to allow an education, as well as paid work, for their daughters. Secondly, *Muhajir* participants have no connection to feudal or tribal settings, as Sindhi participants have. Therefore, the family patterns and socio-cultural values of Urdu-speaking families are categorically different from Sindhi patterns and values in general, and from rural Sindhi areas in particular. An Urdu-speaking Assistant Professor, whose mother was a graduate but a housewife, expressed her role in family decisions/matters as follows:

I am consulted in all matters equally, we make all decisions with mutual consultation and understanding, and I do share my family planning matters with him [husband]. We are Muslims, and God has made man the head of household, so his decisions should be obeyed. To me, a woman should obey her husband, but it does not mean she becomes his slave or servant. (Isabella, 43, AP)

The majority of the Urdu-speaking population are practicing Muslims, though supportive of women's education and employment. Isabella had a religious education⁵⁶, and religion has a significant influence on her life. Thus, through religious education, she has internalised religious norms such as 'man as head of the family', and women's modesty. Therefore, being moderate Muslims and professional women, they support the superior role of man as the head of the family, and expect him to play the role of guardian and protector. The ideal behind complying with the decisions of elders and superiors is to achieve meaningful control over one's own life while living in harmony with family and others (caste) (Mines 1994). However, obeying the husband does not mean she should have a secondary position in the family, but should be an equal partner or member of the family.

Thus, the middle class based in urban areas supports women's education and employment; however, they have developed their own class norms, which determine women's boundaries. Thus, it has been observed that middle class women internalise and manifest a male dominance ideology—status consciousness—, though that differs

⁵⁶ There is an increasing trend of religious education in the rich and middle classes. They do not send their children to Madrasahs, but arrange private home-based tuition of religious education for their children.

from rural based patriarchy, to a greater degree than for lower-class (working class) women for several reasons. One reason might be that elite and upper-middle class men are able to meet the major economic needs of their families. Secondly, in the perceptions of the elite and middle classes, higher education is valued for status achievement and improved matrimonial prospects, rather than for employment and the economic independence of women (Jayaweera 1997). Therefore, elite and upper-middle class women engage themselves in only white-collar jobs as they are conditioned to be role models, and further, they transmit this ideology to the next generation (Sayeed, Javed and Khan 2002; Khan and Khan 2009). Upper-class women's engagement in high-ranking positions or decent occupations increases theirs, as well as the families', symbolic capital (status, prestige and power).

9.3.4. Modernity and Mutual Household Decision-making

In the urban areas of Pakistan, the joint family structure has begun to dissolve in recent years, and women's entry into higher-education and employment has increased. Further, the spread of modern technology, mass awareness, political and social movements for equal rights have played a significant role in creating egalitarian norms in the upper and middle classes. Besides which, higher education and the employment of middle and upper-class women, who work for the sake of a career and for self-fulfillment (Hussain 2008), have created a sense of 'self' and independence amongst these women. These women, who are encouraged by their families in higher education and career development, and who are subject to fewer traditional restrictions, enjoy mutuality and equality in spousal communication, and most family decisions are made mutually; hence, they compete with men and exist with men. Women from such social class backgrounds have developed a sense of mutuality and equality in terms of gender relations within and outside of the home. One academic interviewee expresses her feelings about her participation in decision-making:

We [spouses] both are faculty members in the same department. Neither he nor I [make] decisions individually; we do consult each other, hence, our decisions are mutual. (Barbara, 52, Asso. P)

The above quote highlights the prevailing patterns of modernity, mutuality, equality and liberty in gendered relations among the highly-educated and professional social classes. Mutual respect, reciprocal social relations and interdependency- particularly between spouses- are seen as the centrality of that social class. Further analysis of interviews suggests that younger men and women from higher social classes are the key force

behind this ideational change, in which women are treated as ‘partners’, rather than as ‘dependent entities’ as they are in patriarchal structures (Hussain 2008).

Similarly, non-academic interviewees from such higher social class backgrounds have also observed mutuality in the decision-making practices in their families. Families with such higher social backgrounds also support their daughter-in-law in higher education and decent employment. Lisa, who has an urban background, and married at a young age soon after completion of her Intermediate qualifications (‘A Levels’ in the UK), later graduated from university with the encouragement and support of her husband. Talking about her role in family decisions, she says:

After two years of marriage, my husband encouraged and supported me in having a university education, and I graduated in Sociology. I think higher-education gives confidence and enables a person to live a better life, but as far as decision-making is concerned, it depends upon the background of the family and [the] socialisation of persons. I am consulted in family decisions and he [husband] mostly asks me for suggestion[s], so our decisions are mutual. (Lisa, 36, CO)

Lisa’s story also reveals a greater change or a shift in the patterns and norms of educated urban-based Sindhi families, where newly married women are encouraged to go into higher education and employment, instead of being restricted to household chores/responsibilities (Hussain 2008; Ferdoos 2005). As both Lisa’s parental family and in-laws are educated and settled in the second largest city of Sindh, she was encouraged to go through university education even after her marriage. She feels confident and more independent because of her university education and employment. She acknowledges that participation in family decision-making depends on a person’s socialisation and family background. This indicates that education and economic wellbeing enable and empower people, but factors like the background of one’s family, and one’s locality have a greater positive or negative impact on an individual’s autonomy.

9.4. Economic Autonomy

Access to and control over resources is one of most frequently used indicators (economic dimension) to measure women’s autonomy, empowerment, and status (Jejeebhoy 2000, 2002; Kishore 2000). Without a doubt, these professional women are in better employment and have considerable earnings; however, the question is whether they see themselves as having access to and control over financial resources, and the meanings they attach to this access and control.

The survey data reveals that 86 per cent of academic and 90 per cent of non-academic respondents have had access to and control over their own income and financial resources. Similarly, the majority of academic and non-academic interviewees experienced access to and control over their income and financial resources. However, only two of the married academic interviewees, who belonged to the middle class, have no control over their financial resources. As discussed above, family structure has a potential influence on women's autonomy and social status within and outside of the family. This study finds that family structure and class systems congruously affect women's perceptions of their autonomy. It is seen that women who belong to middle-class urban families, but are married to persons with a rural-based joint family background, have relatively lesser control over their income and resources. Caroline belongs to an urban-based, well-educated, middle-class family, but married a man from a village of Upper Sindh for love. She illustrates the aforementioned point:

I have a good job, handsome income, freedom of expression and participation in decisions and most of our decisions are mutual. However, I will say the final authority is he [husband] and I am dependent on him. Honestly speaking, I am more Eastern family-oriented and religious-minded, so I believe as well I want to see him as the head of [the] family. I fully support him, and he makes all family decisions. (Caroline, 42, AP)

Caroline, belonging to an urban-based middle class, has internalised norms like women as 'role model' (bringing respect to the family) and 'man being head of the family', while her husband's roots in a rural, traditional family expect a woman to be a 'good woman/mother' (i.e., obedient and submissive to her husband). Thus, the convergence of middle class and rural family structures might have influenced her self-confidence and self-esteem, which would ostensibly be raised by her higher education.

In the above quote, the emphasis placed on '*[being] Eastern family-oriented and religious-minded*' reflects the socialisation of girls in middle-class families. They are brought up in such a way that they pursue higher education and career development, but simultaneously they portray themselves as being submissive to male members of the family. They might have been taught in their families that to be 'Western and non-religious' is pejorative and brings dishonour to a woman and her family. Therefore, middle-class women have emphasised phrases such as '*family -oriented*', '*Eastern woman*' and '*religious-oriented*' when sharing their perceptions of their social status and autonomy. It is noticeable here that the cultural norms of shame and honour have a

significant influence on professional women's perception regarding their autonomy and independence. Due to these cultural norms, these professional women might deny their autonomous or equal position (mutual decision-making) within their households. As many feminists have pointed out (Kandiyoti 1988; Saba 2005; Sathar and Kazi 2000; Hassan 2001; Mumtaz and Shaheed 1987; Rashid 2008), culturally it is often considered shameful for a prospective bride to talk openly about her Islamic rights *Nikah* (marriage contract), inheritance, right to lay down conditions regarding polygamy, custody of children in the event of divorce and other important matters which can give her a significant control in her marital future (Ahmad 2015). Similarly, due to South Asian cultural norms of shame and honour, these professional women may not openly claim to be autonomous and independent. Middle-class women's internalisation of these phrases manifests the prevalence of 'bargaining patriarchal' norms (Kandiyoti 1988), wherein professional women (willingly or unwillingly) accept norms instead of challenging them, because there is a benefit to them later when they become senior 'mother-in-law'. Similarly, Christina, belonging to a middle-class family, shares:

I have control over my own income and property, but I am very much [a] 'family-oriented' person, so I do share all with my husband and also seek his suggestion in all family and career matters...I have my own car and house (Christina, 45, AP)

Interestingly, those who belonged to urban-based nuclear families but had a legacy of a rural, traditional family, and perceived comparatively lesser participation in family decisions, actually had greater economic autonomy. Kate, being the second wife and living separately from her husband's first wife and parental family, experienced greater decision-making autonomy in her immediate family, but no participation in decision-making in her husband's parental family back in the village. By contrast, regarding her household decision-making autonomy, she experiences a greater economic autonomy, as she illustrates:

I have control over my income and property. I have my own house and a car... when I bought [the] car he [her husband] did not know it. I went with my brother-in-law and bought a car [...] then I bought a plot of land and constructed a house as I wished to. Simply, I said I have my own money, so it is up to me to decide the map of house [...] and of course his reply was YES. (Kate, 55, Professor)

Kate's quote reflects the changing of family patterns and overall social structure of Sindhi society, which is known as a male-dominated society (Ferdoos 2005; Tabassum

2011). This change has given social space and acceptance to a shift in women's defined roles within and outside of the family, such as allowing them access to education, work, and economic independence. On the other hand, due to the strongest traditional legacy, which supports man's authoritative position in and outside of the family, men are reluctant to accept women's role from a broader socio-cultural perspective. This also manifests itself in that professional women have access to many financial advantages and physical mobility, but still have lesser individual recognition in the society, socially and culturally, because of socio-cultural factors such as patriarchy, the elite or upper-middle classes (symbolic capital: power, prestige) and caste norms (Mumtaz and Salway 2009). As Hussain (2008) finds, even if a woman is highly educated and at a higher-ranking position, her primary duty is to be a good housewife and a good mother; if she fails to obtain a good reputation for being a good wife or mother, then she is considered a failure.

The majority of non-academic participants (most of whom were from lower classes, except for a few working as computer programmers) have greater economic autonomy than the academic participants. None of the non-academic participants experienced having no control over her income and financial resources. Lower-class women (working in lower-ranking positions/labour work) have entered into employment because of their family's economic needs; hence, their economic contribution is recognised and appreciated within the family. The reason behind their having a greater economic autonomy than academic participants (rich or middle class) might be their contribution to the family's income. The interview findings also reveal that the majority of non-academic participants' families are living in rented housing. Hence, they prefer to save their income for buying their own house, as Lucy illustrates below:

I have control over my own income and financial resource[s]. However, I will say that my and his [husband] income is our combined income. We are living in a rented house, and we cannot afford to have own house. Therefore, we mutually have decided to save [the] maximum of my monthly salary for this purpose. (Lucy, 30, LA)

Unmarried non-academic participants experienced higher economic autonomy, and they contribute somehow to their parental families. Most of the parents of unmarried participants expect their daughters to save their income for a 'dowry' when they get married. 'Dowry' means the property given to the bride during the marriage rituals by her parents, or the property expected or even demanded by the husband and his family

from the bride's family (Menski 1998, pp. 141-42). It is argued that a high dowry amount enhances women's decision-making power, and decreases the likelihood of women's exposure to fatal domestic violence in the marital household (Makino 2014). Dowry practices- a common custom observed in South Asian countries, including Pakistan- have been extended, and the amount for a dowry seems to be increasing, particularly in the middle and emerging-middle classes of Pakistan (Gulzar et al 2012). Dowry is a custom of the upper-caste (Brahmins); therefore, the adaptation of upper-caste (rich and middle class in Pakistan) patterns of behaviour by lower castes (lower class) is employed as a means of acquiring higher social status in society, as reflected below:

I have control over my own income and resources. I want to contribute to [the] family but my father refuses, and says whatever you earn is only yours. My mother pushes me to save money for [a] dowry. I, being an elder sibling, support my younger sister and brother, who are students. (Pamela, 35, CP)

Thus, it is concluded from the above discussion that the perceptions of academic participants about their economic autonomy are heterogeneous, though they experience greater economic autonomy compared to their autonomy in decision-making. The influence of class has been witnessed in the perceptions of academic participants regarding their economic autonomy. On the one hand, middle-class women perceived themselves as being economically autonomous and having control over their income and financial resources. On the other hand, they consider themselves '*family-oriented*', '*Eastern woman*' and '*religious-oriented*', and so share and consult with their elder male family members [father/husband] and seek his advice. This might indicate that middle-class women have more monetary advantages, but potentially comparatively lesser economic autonomy. It has been noted that the combination of rural family and middle class (i.e. husband from a rural family, and wife from urban-based middle class) has negatively affected the economic autonomy of women. Non-academic women exercised comparatively more economic autonomy than academic participants. Unmarried women are more economically independent and have control over their financial resources; however, their parents expect and ask them to save money for their dowry for the time of their marriage.

9.5. Autonomy of Physical Mobility

Various studies suggest the positive impact of a woman's education and employment on her social status and autonomy. Women's education is the measure most widely used

for their relative status and autonomy (Jeffery and Basu 1996). Similarly, studies from Pakistan suggest that women's education is strongly associated with women's status and access to resources, but is very weakly associated with their freedom of mobility (Sathar and Kazi 2000). The underlying assumption is that when women are unable to leave their homes; their sphere of activity is restricted to the home. However, the case of women in paid work- particularly in the higher-education sector, which is considered respectable and the most suitable for women (Maqsood et al 2005; Ferdoos 2005) in traditional societies like Pakistan- differs from this assumption, as these women do leave their homes for paid work, and contribute to the family's income. Moreover, women's education allows them to develop interpersonal skills and enhanced self-confidence and self-worth, which may lead towards better employment, greater control over financial resources, and personal autonomy.

Many studies have used indices that were phrased in terms of whether women are permitted to go to or need permission to go to a set of place (e.g., Mason and Smith 1998; Mason 1998). Past studies- mostly quantitative- on women's autonomy in the rural context of Pakistan (e.g., Sathar and Kazi 2000; Jejeebhoy and Sathar 2001) have also used similar indices to measure women's mobility. In this research, I also administered a survey questionnaire to collect responses from the research participants about their physical mobility. The survey data reveals that the majority of the respondents do not travel alone. Less than half of the participants- 42 per cent academic, and 44 per cent non-academic- can travel alone within the city. 44 per cent of academic and 24 per cent of non-academic participants can travel alone to another city, while 40 per cent academic and 10 per cent non-academic agreed that they could go abroad alone if they want. However, this study focuses on the subjective experiences of women; hence, by employing a qualitative approach, I have collected and interpreted the perceptions and experiences of professional women to understand the complexity and influence of intersectional social categories on women's freedom to physical mobility.

Interview findings reveal that academic and non-academic interviewees have greater freedom of physical mobility between cities, and in the city. Observations on the influence of marital status, family background and social class on women's freedom of mobility showed that they are free and do not seek permission; however, almost all interviewees inform elder members of the family- mostly husband or father- about their

outside activities. In other words, it can be a strategy for women to keep their family members informed.

A few of the interviewees, belonging to rural families, and the rich/middle classes, shared that 'informing one's husband or father' is an indirect strategy to seek permission; however, none of them experienced refusal or denial. This strategy of 'informing' used by these professional women reflects Kandiyoti's (1988) concept of patriarchal bargains (strategies to accommodate and negotiate positions and roles). According to Kandiyoti, '...often, through choices of their own, they are working outside their homes and are thus 'exposed'; they must now use every symbolic means at their disposal to signify that they continue to be worthy of protection' (Kandiyoti 1988, p. 283).

Elite and upper-middle class married women perceive themselves autonomous in their physical mobility; they are not forbidden to travel alone nor do they need to ask permission for travelling alone; however, they prefer to go with family members or with servants to show they are 'worthy of protection' using 'symbolic means' (Kandiyoti 1988). Academic women belong to the elite and the upper-middle classes, and in those classes, there is a culture of having servants (such as drivers, guards, cooks, and house cleaners) and having such personnel becomes an identifying factor of the rich and middle classes in the province of Sindh. It is also observed that the majority of married academic interviewees have personal cars, and have hired drivers for 'pick and drop' services. Reasons behind the hiring of a driver could include this being viewed as a symbol of 'social status'; and established gender-related norms of the middle classes, which expect women to be a 'role model'. As Kandiyoti (1988, p. 285) finds, 'patriarchal bargains do not merely inform women's rational choices, but also shape the more unconscious aspects of their gendered subjectivity.' One of the academic interviewees belonging to a rich class shares:

I can travel alone; there is no restriction from my husband and in-laws. I have visited many countries; even I lived about a year in America [USA]. Therefore, my husband has no objection regarding my physical mobility. Often, I come to the university with my husband, as he is also a professor there in the same department. However, in the case of his absence I take my driver with me; usually, I do not travel alone. (Charlotte, 45, AP)

Most responses from married academic interviewees, belonging to the rich and the middle classes, were along the lines of *'yes, I can travel alone but I prefer to do so with*

family members or friends’ or *‘I don’t need permission, but I do inform’*. These phrases reflect the symbolic capital (power and prestige) and social status of the middle classes, and these women travelling alone may incur a loss of social prestige in the community and society, though their physical movement is more legitimate. Therefore, they prefer to travel with family, servants or friends within the city.

Interestingly, these women have significant physical mobility in being able to go abroad (knowledge autonomy: exposure to career development within and outside of the country), though they have lesser intra-city and inter-city physical mobility. Women’s higher education, as cultural capital of the middle and rich classes, increases symbolic capital (power and prestige); hence, women are encouraged towards advanced education and career development training abroad, as reflected in the statement below:

Yes, I have complete freedom of physical or social movement. Currently, I am doing my PhD in the United Kingdom, and living there alone thousands [of] miles away from my family. My family has no objection. (Christina, 45, AP)

By contrast, the majority of non-academics (belonging to lower and working classes) had a greater freedom of physical mobility, particularly within a city. However, they experienced a limited or restricted physical mobility between cities. The reason for this could be a lack of financial resources, as well as the gendered norms of their families. Unlike married academic interviewees, married non-academic interviewees mostly go to the market with their female friends, and they inform their families, as reflected below:

I can travel and visit my family and friends alone, but for all that, I have to inform my husband; no need to get permission. I think keeping him informed is very important for smooth marital life, and same he does too [sic]. (Lisa, 36, CO)

Lisa, as well as her husband, inform each other about their outdoor activities, which shows the impact of modernisation on urban-based middle and working class families. As the result of modernisation, family patterns have begun to change, and they value egalitarian practices such as mutuality, togetherness and interdependence in spousal social relations. Both husband and wife are aware of the importance of harmonious marital relations.

It is seen that unmarried academic interviewees are likely to be more independent in terms of their physical mobility. There were four unmarried academic interviewees, out of twenty. Interestingly, all of them had PhDs (two local and two foreign) and personal

cars, but unlike married academic women, they drive the car themselves. One unmarried academic participant perceived her freedom of physical mobility thus:

I am an independent woman; I do not need to seek for any kind of permission, though I do keep my parents informed. I have my personal car, and I myself drive it instead of hiring a driver. I think it is all because of my parents: they have given me confidence, and it depends upon socialisation. Otherwise, I have seen many of my colleagues who are hesitant to travel alone. (Jennifer, 40, Assoc. P)

Similarly, unmarried non-academic interviewees perceived more autonomy in terms of freedom of physical mobility within their city, and between cities.

I can visit my relatives and friends. I can travel within [the] city, and inter-cities. Many times, I traveled to Islamabad, Lahore, and Karachi for education and training purpose. I do inform my father, and that is like a strategy to get permission. He never ever refused me; you can say that is not 'seeking permission', but just to inform him. (Adele, 40, Coordinator)

Besides factors relating to gender, other factors that negatively affected women's freedom of physical mobility which emerged from analysis of the interviews are participants' personal fears, inter-caste conflicts, ethnic conflicts, bad governance and poor inter-city transportation, as illustrated below:

I travel alone within the city, but I do not travel alone from one city to another. I do inform my family; it is not like seeking for permission but yes, keeping family informed...we might call it a 'first consent'. Reasons behind not traveling alone are poor governance, poor transportation, lawlessness and inter-caste conflicts. (Grace, 45, AP)

Thus, it is concluded from the above analysis that both academic and non-academic women perceive themselves as being autonomous in terms of physical mobility; however, their marital status and economic class have influenced their physical mobility. Middle-class married women have comparatively less physical mobility than unmarried academic and non-academic participants. It seems that they have limited autonomy, and for them, 'autonomy' might include access to fewer financial resources and the amelioration of living standards. Married women from the rich and middle classes do not travel alone within the city, and they mostly travel with family members or servant/drivers, while the unmarried women traveled alone or with their friends. On the contrary, non-academic women travel alone or with their friends within the city, and between cities. It is witnessed that higher education and employment have provided these women with physical autonomy; however, demographic factors and gender norms

have influenced women's physical autonomy. In the next section, I shall discuss women's autonomy over their health.

9.6. Autonomy over Health

Most of the available literature in gender studies suggests that women's access to health and family planning/contraception is one of the important indicators when measuring women's status, and autonomy- particularly in the South Asian region, which is known as 'belt of patriarchy' (Caldwell 1983; Kandiyoti 1988). Many researchers have measured the mother's capacity to decide about their children's affairs, while considering the relations between infants and children (e.g., Durrant and Sathar 2000). Various indices have been used to measure women's autonomy, access to health care is one index used in South Asian context. Studies suggest a correlation between women's autonomy and maternal health care utilisation (Ahmed et al 2010; Thapa and Niehof 2013), whereby women's increased autonomy improves maternal health service utilisation in developing countries (Furuta and Salway 2006). Jeffery and Jeffery's (1996) findings in the context of rural North India suggested educated girls had more influence over their own marriages; however, caste and family patterns had an influence on fertility trends.

Considering 'women's access to health and family planning methods' as one of the most important indices in measuring female's autonomy, I attempted to seek out the perceptions of women about their 'health autonomy' by exploring their access to health, intra-spousal communication regarding the use of family planning methods, number of children (if any) and women's maternal health .

The quantitative findings reveal that 62 per cent of academic, and 40 percent of non-academic participants consult their husbands about family planning matters. However, the qualitative findings suggest a positive association between women's higher education and better maternal health, and women's higher-education increases the utilisation of maternal health services and decreases the birth rate. The majority of interviewees exercised health autonomy, and they preferred to visit the doctor alone, or with female family members, rather than with their husbands. It is noticeable here that academic women, as they are economically sound, visit private female doctors for their medical (reproductive) checkups rather than public hospitals⁵⁷. The trend of visiting

⁵⁷ Since in Pakistan in general, and the province of Sindh in particular, public health services are not satisfactory, there is an emerging trend of private clinics in cities. Many private medical centers and

private clinics reveals the level of awareness amongst academic participants about their health issues- particularly reproductive health issues- and privileged access to health facilities. Married women prefer to visit private female doctors alone; however, they are comfortable sharing all reproductive health issues with their husbands.

I am an independent woman. I myself visit my private female doctors; however, I am not hesitant to share reproductive health issues with my husband. (Charlotte, 45, AP)

The majority of married women in the sample have two children; this indicates the level of awareness about their health, and the acceptance of contraception amongst urban-based professional women. Findings show that these women feel comfortable consulting and discussing with their partners the number of children they would like, methods of family planning, and other reproductive health issues; as a mother of two children shares:

I feel comfortable sharing my [reproductive] health issues and family planning matters with my husband. However, my sister is a medical doctor, so I share and seek her advice. We have two boys and we wish to have a daughter- but after completion of my PhD, as I have been awarded a scholarship, and he has a PhD from the United Kingdom. (Caroline, 42, AP)

The above quote indicates the wide acceptance of contraceptive practices in the middle classes, where career is given importance alongside women's health. Caroline and her husband's mutual decision to have one more child (hoping for a daughter) shows that she places value on communication between spouses, and having an intimate marital relationship. Such practices of mutual decision-making about having children, and having intimate marital relationships in educated Sindhi families, indicate a positive shift from traditional family patterns to more egalitarian family patterns in educated Sindhi families based in urban areas. Most significantly, it was observed that women's household decision-making autonomy and economic autonomy were affected by the combination of class (her affiliation with middle class) and family structure (husband's joint family based in a village). Caroline, aside from these two types of autonomy (decision-making and economic), has a greater health autonomy and intimate communication with her partner.

laboratories can be found in cities. Secondly, due to corruption and poor governance, public health services have lost their credibility, even with the masses. Therefore, people in general (and rich /middle class in particular) prefer to private medical checkups.

9.7. Perception of Independent life

There is a culture of collectivism in South Asian societies, and individual liberty has been discouraged. As most South Asian countries- including Pakistan- are basically patriarchal, the custom of collectivism has been regulated, reinforced, and transmitted to the next generation through the system of kinship and extended family. As Pakistan falls into a ‘patriarchal belt’, and is a predominantly rural society (about 67%) based on kinship, extended family and caste, the concept of ‘independence or liberty’ is altogether distinctive that of from the West, and requires understanding in the local cultural milieu. Furthermore, in Pakistani society, women’s modesty is linked with the family’s honour. Specifically, amongst families with higher SES, a ‘role model or good woman’ is characterised as being unselfish, calm, tolerant, empathetic; able to organise, compromise, coordinate and maintain hospitality within the house (Ali et al 2011). Such characterisation of women has negatively influenced a woman’s independent life, choices and decisions. Thus, the family’s honour, along with other cultural barriers, halts a person in general- and women in particular- being able to make individual choices. Women’s choices and decisions are questioned in light of how they may affect or jeopardise her ‘family honour’ (Kazim, Schmidt and Brown 2007).

According to the perceptions and experiences of these professional women, ‘independence/liberty’ or ‘independent life’ is restricted, because the family is more important than a person’s independence, or independent life, in a local context. When there is a comparison between the ‘personal/social independence’ of men and women in the broader socio-cultural perspectives, ‘women’s independent life’ is defined in a local cultural context, and it is related to Islam and Muslim societies. To them, the Western concept of ‘individual liberty’ is considered ‘delinquent behaviour’ in the Pakistani context. Being Muslims, they have different identity and values, as illustrated below:

We are part of a family. We have no individual liberty or independence like people have in the Western societies. Our religion and cultural norms are altogether different from the West [And] We, being Muslims, have to follow them... we cannot go against our religious norms and traditions. Islam has set the boundaries for both sexes, and each [has] to remain in [their] fixed domain (Cathy, 47, Assoc. P)

Interviewees shared that, being Eastern Muslim women, they are part of a family, and ‘individuality’ has no social acceptance and recognition in society. It has been noticed that the family has a potential negative impact on ‘personal autonomy or independence’; particularly on women’s independence or independent life. As discussed above, the

majority of academic and non-academic interviewees experienced autonomy in terms of household decision-making, mobility, access to and control over financial resources, and use of contraception; thus, they perceive themselves as ‘independent’. However, perceiving themselves as independent, but simultaneously being part of Muslim families, they are responsible for following established religious and family norms or values which negate individuality. Thus, they acknowledge that there is no ‘personal autonomy’ like in the West; however, it is collective, and women’s independence is relatively less than that of man in our society. Pakistan scores very low on the individualism score (Guney et al 2006) and thus, being a collectivist society, emphasises togetherness and interconnectedness (Mumtaz and Salway 2009). Therefore, in such a cultural context, these women define their meaning of personal autonomy, individuality, and liberty within the framework of collectivism.

These women perceive that women’s independence or independent life is based on her economic and household decision-making autonomy, and they perceive themselves as ‘independent’ as they have reached higher education and are doing paid work outside of the home without any restrictions from the family. Analysis of the interviews suggested that those who are economically independent perceived themselves to be more independent compared to those having lesser economic autonomy, as illustrated below:

Economic independence gives her confidence, while [the] family expects her economic role in the family’s economic wellbeing. I have my own income, so I feel myself independent, whatever I want I can buy, and can travel as well. I am not dependent on someone. (Christina, 45, AP)

Similarly, non-academic interviewees perceived themselves as ‘independent’ (as defined above in the local context). They also share that economic independence means one’s not being dependent on the family or others, as illustrated below:

My university education has enhanced my self-confidence, and my employment has made me independent; thus, I am living my independent life. This sense of independence gives courage and raises your voice. It is very true when a person contributes to his/her family, then they [family] do listen to him/her more than a person who is economically dependent on family. (Agnes, 35, LA)

Thus, it is concluded that concept of ‘independent life’ or ‘individual independence or liberty’ is variable, and should be studied and understood within local socio-cultural and socio-religious parameters. Being Muslim women and belonging to the middle classes, research participants perceive the concept of individuality or individual liberty seen in Western society as delinquent behaviour, and against the teachings of Islam and local

cultural norms. They perceived themselves ‘independent’ in terms of economic stability, decision-making, career development, and physical mobility; however, they emphasise that in the context of Pakistani/Sindhi society there is no concept of ‘individuality’ or ‘personal independence’. Therefore, individuals’- specifically women’s- choices and decisions are centralised in the core of the family. Before making any personal choice or decisions, the individual’s family honour and dignity are kept in mind.

9.8. Conclusion

From the findings of the chapter, it can be argued that concepts of ‘autonomy’ and ‘independence’ may not be useful indices for measuring or assessing the social position or status of women in society, because these concepts are perceived and understood differently across the globe, and different meanings are attributed to them within groups of the same culture. The findings suggest that the notions of autonomy and independence are socially constructed, and the meanings attached to them are deeply rooted in cultural specificity; hence, cultural specificity should be taken into consideration in order to understand women’s autonomy and independence. As Jeffery and Jeffery (1996) argue, asking ‘who made’ a particular decision is a crude indicator, which is unable to dissect the subtleties involved. Secondly, the ‘women’s autonomy paradigm’ places undue emphasis on women’s independent and autonomous actions. This has challenged the understanding of gendered structures, processes, and inequalities in South Asia, as it ignores the strong emotional and structural bonds between women and men (Mumtaz and Salway 2009), and between individuals and the family. Jeffery, Jeffery and Lyon (1989), highlighting the cultural incongruity of ‘autonomy’ as a concept, found that those words that came closest to it, such as ‘*azadi*’ or ‘*khudmukhtari*’, have pejorative connotations at the individual level. In the local cultural context, the words *azad*, and *mukhtiyar* refer to having control or authority to act as a free agent, but when applied to women, their positive resonance changes to a negative one, as seen with the use of *besharm* (immodest and shameless) (Jeffery and Jeffery 1996, p. 181).

The qualitative findings of this study suggested that ‘collectivity’ is the essence of Pakistani society while ‘individuality’ has socially and culturally been dishonoured- as Mumtaz and Salway (2009) found, ‘*akhathe*’ (togetherness or joint-ness) rather than individuality is the social ethic of Pakistani society. Thus, in such a collectivist society,

the concepts of autonomy, equality, independence, and individuality (specifically women's) should be considered within the context of collectivism, rather than individualism and liberalism. Notions of autonomy and independence are related to the concept of individuality, which originates in western capitalist societies- particularly America, where the individual is judged as an independent, self-contained agent, and valued equally –at least notionally—in law, within a dominant ethos that supports individualism (Mines 1994, p. 150). These notions are understood differently in Pakistan, as in other South Asian societies, because an individual is neither an independent, nor a self-contained agent, but he or she establishes his or her uniqueness in the context of a group (family and caste). Mines (1994), in the context of Tamil Nadu society, suggested two senses of individuality: a private (internal) sense and a public (civic) sense. In Tamil culture, civic individuality is circumscribed by ideas that stress altruism and, in effect, sub-ordinate the self-interest of individuals to the interests of their groups. What distinguishes these two senses of individuality is that the internal sense involves a psychological awareness and evaluation of self, and the need to achieve some control in life. However, an individual's choices, decisions, personal autonomy or independence- specifically for women, as the notion of family honour is linked women's body/sexuality (Khawar 2005; Khan 1998; Banbhro et al 2013) - are affected by family, marital status, caste, *biradari* (kinship/community) and class, along with the socio-cultural setting.

The findings also demonstrated that in the context of bounded or limited autonomy, the majority of academic and non-academic interviewees perceived themselves as autonomous in household decisions. However, the level of importance of any decisions made, and social settings- along with family structure, marital status, caste, ethnicity and class- are strong predictors of women's autonomy and independence within the context of collectivism, as South Asian culture does not encourage individualism and self-expression (Marriott 1990, p. 17). The practice of 'mutual decisions' in the richer and/or middle classes has been seen, which indicates how middle-class women negotiate and accommodate their own identity and social position within the family. They experienced that a 'husband's nature or temperament' has a potential influence on a wife's autonomy and independence.

Further, the findings of this chapter argued that ethnicity was a potential influencing factor on women's autonomy and independence. *Muhajir* women (migrants from

India)—though usually more fully-practicing Muslims—experienced comparatively greater autonomy than Sindhi participants. This further indicated that region and culture are stronger predictors of women’s autonomy than religion (Jejeebhoy and Sathar 1995).

The findings observed women’s experiences of greater economic autonomy and autonomy over health (including intra-spousal communication). This greater economic and health autonomy reflects women’s strategies for maximising their life choices (Kandiyoti 1988) within the framework of collectivism, as Mines (1994) suggests expression of [civic] individuality within togetherness in Tamil society. The findings also argued that a spouse’s higher-education and better employment raise their socio-economic status (SES), and minimise economic crisis in the family. This maximises the chances of intra-spousal communication, intimacy and mutuality in their relationships.

The following chapter will discuss the conclusion of this thesis.

Chapter Ten: Conclusion and Implications

10.1. Introduction

The aim of this thesis was to explore and examine the perceptions and experiences of professional women about their status, autonomy, and independence at the UoSJP in particular and in the community in general. It also explores how these professional women have translated their acquired resources (education and employment) into the agency (process) (Kabeer 1999) in order to achieve autonomy and independence within the household and community. This last chapter of the thesis aims primarily: to draw together the findings of the three ‘analysis’ chapters (nos.7, 8 and 9) based on the main research questions (see chapter 1); to sum up the theoretical and methodological reflections; and to present the implications of this research.

Section 10.2 summarises the key analytical points of the three analysis chapters (with reference to the main research questions), and section 10.3 discusses the implications of the main conclusions from the research, while section 10.4 presents the contribution of the thesis.

10.2. Reflection on key theoretical findings of the research

This thesis engages with the broader sociological and anthropological debates surrounding women’s status, autonomy, and gender equality, which are largely rooted in gender studies. Particularly in the context of South Asia, such debates have drawn the attention of feminist researchers, sociologists, and anthropologists, because the region-known as a ‘belt of patriarchy’ (Kandiyoti 1988; Moghadam 2004) - has witnessed demographic changes due to rapid industrialisation, urbanisation and migration.

This thesis argued that the elite and middle classes considered teaching in higher-educational institutions as a prestigious profession for women, which increases the symbolic capital of the family. Because, culturally, this profession not only helps with upholding women’s respectability and family honour (Khan 2006), but also brings respectability and honour to their respective families. The thesis engaged with recent literature on gender studies, connects the ideas that ‘teaching is a feminine profession’, teaching is a noble profession’ and the ‘good public image of [the] teaching profession’ (Maqsood et al 2005; Ferdoos 2005; Khan 2006; Khattak 2014; Hussein 1996) with women teachers’ ‘self-respect or self -worth’ and ‘family honour’ (Ghazala and Khalid 2012; Akhtar 2012). The findings suggest an enhanced respectability for women

employees in the workplace; however, they face gender discrimination, harassment and sexist behaviour in the workplace. This contradiction was due to heretofore developed gender relations in society and, furthermore, a lack of professionalism and a lack of implementation of gender-related policies in the workplace.

The variation in perceptions and experiences of the academic and non-academic women regarding their respectability in the workplace, demonstrates the significance of women's institutionalised cultural, economic and symbolic capitals (Bourdieu 1986; Lin 2001; Reay 2004). Academic participants experienced their respectability as being very high in the workplace, because they possessed higher institutionalised cultural and symbolic capitals than the non-academic participants. Teaching as a prestigious and honoured profession gives women higher levels of symbolic capital within and outside the workplace. Thus, the respect and dignity of women in the workplace are largely associated with the social background of their families and degrees of social and symbolic capitals they possess.

This research, consolidating that of past studies (Sathar and Kazi 2000; Bari 2000; Jejeebhoy and Sathar 2001), highlighted the complexity and multidimensional aspects of women's status in the Sindhi society. The thesis argued that professional women's status is heterogeneous- not only due to patriarchy and gender relations, but also due to various other social categories, such as family structure, age, marital status, caste, class, ethnicity, locale, and type of employment (Sathar and Kazi 2000). Thus, the thesis reveals the importance of the intersectional approach in the exploration of women's perspective regarding their status and position in the community. Drawing from Sathar and Kazi's (2000) argument that family structure and region are more important than religion for women's status, the thesis argued that intersection of women's type of family (nuclear or joint) and place of residence (i.e. urban/rural; upper-market/slum areas)-along with women's symbolic capital-is a key determinant of their social status in the community. Nuclear or semi-nuclear family structures have contributed to the elevation of professional women's social status more, when compared to the joint family structure.

Additionally, the thesis claims the significance of the Bourdieusian concept of capitals in exploring and assessing the women's social status in the community. The possession of economic, cultural, social and symbolic capital varies with social class (Sullivan

2002); hence, the analysis of women's capitals provides the picture of women's social class, and helps in comparing women's social status or position with women of the same social class and with others. By so doing, this thesis claims that the greater the possession of Bourdieusian capitals, the higher the social status and position of women within and outside the family, however, other intersecting factors, for example, type of family, age, marital status, ethnicity, can influence this claim.

The thesis argued that Sindhi society largely is patriarchal in its socio-cultural and socio-political characteristics (Isran and Isran 2012). However, due to the industrialisation, rapid women's education and employment, it is transforming, or losing some of its control, in terms of 'classic patriarchy' (Kandiyoti 1988). The findings demonstrate the influence of women's capitals (economic, cultural and symbolic) on their perceptions regarding the prevalence of patriarchy and male dominance within and outside the family. (i) Women from the elite and/or upper-middle classes (have higher cultural and symbolic capitals) perceived patriarchy as an 'abstraction or conception'; (ii) women from the urban-based middle class (nuclear families) perceived a transformation within patriarchy; and (iii) women belonging to rural-based lower classes (possessing lower symbolic capital), and those who were the first generation in their families (joint families) to enter into paid employment, perceived and experienced 'classic patriarchy', with a slight change in its mode of operation. Thus, the findings demonstrate that women from middle and lower-middle classes living in a patriarchal arrangement, employ various strategies to negotiate for their maximum security and life options. The most common strategy was avoiding direct clashes with their husbands and family, and securing personal as well as intimates' benefits by accommodating themselves with such arrangements.

This thesis argued that existing concepts of 'autonomy' and 'independence' may not be useful indices/indicators for measuring the social status or position of women in Sindhi society, due to variations in understanding or the meanings attributed to these concepts across the globe (and even within cultures). These professional women perceived concepts of autonomy, independence, and individuality categorically different than those of Westernised understandings. This research asserts that Sindhi society, similarly to Tamil society (Mines 1994) emphasises social groups (family; caste) rather than individuals. Hence, 'collective identities' are the essence of Sindhi society, however; individuals find their autonomy, independence, and individuality in the context of

‘others’ (Mines 1994, p. 188). The thesis argues that these professional women are aware of, and very careful in exercising, their personal autonomy and individuality within the contexts of ‘collective identities’, ‘togetherness’ and ‘interdependence’ because individuals-specifically women, as they are considered symbols for the ‘honour of family’- who pursue self-interest at the cost of ‘family honour’ are known as being ‘without honour’.

10.3. Implications of the research

As this is a case study, certain limitations are evident in terms of the generalisability of this thesis’ findings in various contexts. However, the results of this research may prove useful for higher-educational institutions in Sindh (and at UoSJP in particular) for making gender-friendly policies and a conducive workplace environment. Further, this research, as an empirical example, may be useful for public departments and civil society organisations, which are working for gender equality in Sindh. Patriarchy and gender-relations as the roots of gender inequality and the lower status of women are a focus of discourse within civil society. However, this research, employing the intersectional approach, has explored other social categories (such as ethnicity, class, caste, region, and family structure etc.) which affect women’s status and autonomy within the household and in the community in general. Following on from this are the implications of this research.

10.3.1. Implications for Female Autonomy

My findings demonstrated the implications for women’s autonomy, and ‘autonomy’s’ conceptual adequacy and usefulness in understanding women’s position in societies which emphasise ‘collectivism’, ‘togetherness’, and ‘interdependence’. Ethnographic findings demonstrated incongruities between the concept of female autonomy (Jeffery, Jeffery and Lyon 1989) and the gendered social, economic, cultural and political realities (Mumtaz and Salway 2009) of women’s lives in Sindh (Pakistan).

The ‘women’s autonomy paradigm’ places undue emphasis on women’s independent and autonomous actions (Jaffery and Jeffery 1996; Mumtaz and Salway 2009). This has been a challenge in understanding gendered structures, processes and inequalities in South Asia, as it ignores the strong emotional and structural bonds between women and men (Mumtaz and Salway 2009), and between individuals and family. Notions of autonomy and independence are related to the concept of individuality, which originates in Western capitalist societies- particularly America, where the individual is judged as

an independent, self-contained agent, and valued equally—at least notionally—in law, within a dominant ethos that supports individualism (Mines 1994, p. 150). Qualitative findings of this study suggest that ‘collectivity’ is the essence of Sindhi society, while ‘individuality’ has been socially and culturally dishonored- as Mumtaz and Salway (2009) found, ‘*akhathe*’ (togetherness or joint-ness), rather than individuality, is the social ethic of Pakistani society. Thus, in such a collectivist society, concepts of autonomy, equality, independence, and individuality (specifically women’s) should be considered within the context of collectivism, rather than individualism and liberalism.

10.3.2.Implications for higher-educational institutions

This research found a prevalence of gender discrimination (i.e. underestimation of women’s competence and intellect), harassment (sexual) and sexist behaviour in the workplace- particularly by immediate superiors- through the medium of making sexual jokes, commenting on women’s dress and body, etc. The major reasons found by this study for such situations occurring in the workplace were male-dominating behaviour and a lack of professionalism (work ethics). It is therefore recommended that higher-educational institutions (particularly UoSJP) revisit their policies on professionalism, and employ gender-friendly work environment mechanisms. Additionally, it was concluded from the interviews that favouritism and nepotism are common practice in recruitment, departmental promotions, and other official assignments. Therefore, university management should develop a transparent mechanism of recruitment and promotion, and should ensure its strict implementation.

Thirdly, UoSJP should follow the Protection against Harassment of Women in the workplace Act 2010, establish an Inquiry Committee⁵⁸, and ensure the implementation of said act, in order to ensure a more conducive and professional environment and improve the overall work performance of the organisation. Finally, a departmental sub-inquiry committee (at least one member of which must be a woman) should be established, which should collect facts and ensure protection of the complainant, in the case of any complaints of harassment being submitted.

10.3.3.Implications for civil society organisations

The findings of this research showed practices of gender discrimination, harassment (sexual), and those who face this prefer to remain silent because of fear of losing

⁵⁸ The Committee shall consist of three members, of whom at least one shall be woman, one from senior management, and one shall be a senior representative of the employees.

personal and family honour, and due to being unfamiliar with policy at laws. Therefore, it is crucial for civil society organisations in general, and organisations working for women's right and gender equality in particular, to establish links and networking with public organisations to create a conducive working environment for women.

Secondly, the majority of female employees- whether faculty members or non-faculty members- did not know about the anti-discrimination legislation, i.e. The Protection of Women (Amendment) Act 2006, and Protection against Harassment of Women in the Workplace Act 2010. Hence, organisations working for women's rights should launch awareness and advocacy-raising campaigns, so that female employees can be made aware of the available legislation and legal procedures. Thirdly, civil society organisations should develop networking with the university administration to ensure the establishment of Inquiry Committee, as required by the afore-mentioned Act, and the implementation of developed policy in the workplace in light of said Act.

10.3.4. Implications for future research

This study is limited to female employees at UoSJP, which is the oldest public university in the province of Sindh, and its employees and students are mostly from interior Sindh (excluding Karachi). Consequently, it may be interesting to learn whether female employees in other public universities in the province of Sindh, and in Karachi⁵⁹ in particular, are experiencing the same sort of gender discrimination, harassment, and impacts on their social status and autonomy. Secondly, this research is based on a case study with a small sample size, so a similar type of study on a larger scale, focusing on all the public universities in the province, may provide a wider picture of female employees at public universities. This could be of great help to the provincial government, as well as for the universities' management, in developing a more conducive working environment for female employees.

10.4. Contribution of the thesis

Past studies in the context of Pakistan (Sindh) have quantitatively assessed women's status or position by using their education, employment, age and marital status as indicators (Ferdoos 2005; Shah 2002). By contrast, this study, employing feminist standpoint and intersectional approach, has explored women's own understanding of

⁵⁹ In Karachi, Urdu-speaking are the majority, while other ethnic groups like Punjabi, Sindhi, Baloch, Pashtun, and other international migrants like Afghani and Burmese, live in sufficient number. It might be essential to investigate how family patterns, ethnicity, patriarchy and class are linked with women's social status and autonomy in this context.

and meanings they attributed to these theoretical concepts form their subjective perspective. The combination of feminist standpoint and intersectional approach has allowed to explore women's subjective experiences and unique social standpoints (Swigonski 1993), and to explore complexity and understand differing perspectives within a group of professional women about social realities. Thus, the thesis makes three key contributions to the understanding of professional women's perception and experience of status, autonomy, and independence.

Firstly, the major contribution this research offers is that it has established a pathway for researchers and policy makers regarding gender equality by reflecting on the various problematic theoretical concepts such as 'women's autonomy' 'independence' and 'individuality' used for assessing women's status and position in Pakistani society. This research has explored women's status and position within and outside the home from women's own subjective perspectives rather than by using quantitatively established indices/indicators/parameters. FST asserts that the less powerful members of a society experience a different social reality than men- the dominant group- because of their oppression (Collins 1989; Harding 1991).

Secondly, the major contribution of the thesis is the exploration of multiple social categories, which influence these professional women's experience of status and autonomy while under employment at the same workplace. Thus, the thesis has explored the intersecting factors rather than focusing on a single dimension of social difference, i.e. patriarchy and /or gender.

Thirdly, this thesis has explored and compared professional women's capitals (Bourdieu 1986) and its influence on their positions within and outside the home. Theoretically, interrogating professional women's multiple identities construction from Bourdieusian framework has provided a better understanding of women's status, as the relationship between professional women's multiple identities and possession of capitals has not been researched in Sindh (Pakistan).

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Glossary

Ada	Sindhi word means elder Brother
Ahadith	Plural of Hadith used for sayings by the Prophet
Al-Muallim	Arabic word means teacher
Azaadi	Freedom
Baba	Sindhi word for Father
Bhotar	Landlord, feudal lord
Biradari	kinship or community
Budh	Sindhi word for listen
Burqa	Sindhi word mean veil
Chador	Cloth used by women to cover head and body
Du pata	A piece of cloth used by women to cover head/neck/shoulders
Gharelo	Domesticated
Had	Limit or restriction
Deeni madaris	Religious schools
Hedhanhn	Hey or hi
Hijab	Cloth for covering head
Ijtihad	The exercise of reason in jurisprudence
Iqra	Arabic word for reading
Izzat	Honour or respect
Jirga	Pashtu word means council
Kala kali	Punjabi word for honour killing
Karo Kari	Sindhi word means honour killing
Khudmukhtari	Autonomy
Khula	Divorce sought be a woman
Maa	Sindhi word for mother
Mahr	Dover (money demanded by bride for
Muhajirs	Urdu-speaking migrants who came to Pakistan from India after independence in 1947.
Piyo	Sindhi word for Father
Qazi	Judge
Raees	Landlord, feudal lord
Rol	Sindhi word for wonderer (characterless)
Sardar	Landlord, feudal lord
Sharifzadi	Decent/submissive
Siyahkari,	Blochi word for Honour killing
Sughar	Domestically skilled woman
Tahsil	District
Talaq	Divorce
Talaq-e-tafweez	The right of divorce delegated to the wife by the husband
Tor tora,	Pashtu word for honour killing
Wadero	Landlord, feudal lord
Wali	Guardian
Zan	woman
Zar	Wealth
Zameen	Land
Zaat	Caste, or communal group affiliation

Appendices



A: Formal Request to Access Participants

The Registrar
University of Sindh,
Jamshoro, Sindh, Pakistan

Subject: Conducting research in the University of Sindh with academic and non-academic female staff.

I am doing DPhil in Sociology at the University of Sussex, Brighton, United Kingdom. My research title is 'Professional Women's Perceptions & Experiences of Respectability, Social Status, and Autonomy: a Case Study of Women Employed at the University of Sindh, Jamshoro, Sindh-Pakistan.

I would be very appreciative if you could allow me to conduct my research in the University of Sindh, Jamshoro.

Thanking you very much in advance for your co-operation.

Best regards,

September 5, 2013

Mukesh Kumar Khatwani
DPhil candidate
School of Law, Politics and Sociology
University of Sussex, Brighton

B: Consent Form for Project Participants

Project Title 'Professional Women's Perceptions & Experiences of Respectability, Social Status, and Autonomy: a Case Study of Women Employed at the University of Sindh, Jamshoro, Sindh-Pakistan.

Project Approval Reference: 1112/11/09

I agree to take part in research activities as briefed in provided information sheet. I understood that my participation is voluntary, that I can choose not to participate in part or all of the project, and that I can withdraw at any stage of the project without being penalised or disadvantaged in anyway.

I consent to the processing of my personal information for the purpose of this study. I understand that such information will be treated as strictly confidential and handled in accordance with Data Protection Act1998.

Name: _____

Signature:_____ Date: _____

C: Participants Information Sheet

Study title: Professional Women's Perceptions & Experiences of Respectability, Social Status, and Autonomy: a Case Study of Women Employed at the University of Sindh, Jamshoro, Sindh-Pakistan.

Invitation paragraph: You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide whether or not to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully.

The purpose of the study: To explore the perceptions and experiences of professional women at the University of Sindh, Jamshoro-Pakistan (UoSJP), regarding their respectability, social status, and autonomy.

Is participation voluntary?

Participation is voluntary, and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason.

What will happen to me if I take part?

Two instruments will be used for data collection, structured questionnaire and semi-structured interview. This activity could take time about 60-90 minutes.

Will my information in this study be kept confidential?

All information volunteered here will be anonymised and treated with the utmost confidentiality and will be used for the purpose of this study. Your signed consent form will be kept separately from your interview transcript.

What will happen to the results of this research study?

The results of this study will be used in thesis for DPhil degree at the University of Sussex, Brighton, United Kingdom.

Who is organising and funding this research?

The Area Study Centre, UoSJP, under its 'Faculty Development Programme' funded me DPhil studies at School of Law, Politics and sociology, University of Sussex, Brighton.

Who has approved this study?

This study has been approved by the Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (C-REC) through the School of Law, Politics and Sociology, university of Sussex, Brighton.

D: Semi-Structured in-depth Interview Guide

Basic Information:

Name of respondent: _____

Age: _____ Marital Status: _____

No. of children: _____ Type of family: _____

Highest Qualification: _____ Current position with RBS: _____

Monthly Income in PKR: _____ Years of work experience _____

Questions:

1. Please tell me the history of your education.
2. Did you face any difficulties to get higher education? If yes, please explain them, and what steps you took to overcome these difficulties?
3. Did your family support you to get higher? If so, how? If not, how?
4. Please tell me the history of your route getting into higher education.
5. Please share your experiences as a woman working in male dominated society? Have you experienced male dominating culture within work place (University of Sindh)? If so, how and in what forms it exists?
6. Are you facing any problem at workplace? If yes, nature of problems. What initiatives you have taken to overcome these problems?
7. Does your family support your outside work? In terms of sharing domestic labour/childcare etc.?
8. How do you see your profession? What is its public image? Why were you attracted to it in the first place? How do you see it now?
9. Do you think women should work outside the home like men? If so, why and at what level? If not, why?
10. Do you think working women are considered respectable in Pakistani society? If so, how? If not, how?
11. Does a higher educational qualification empower women? If so, in what ways? If no, why not?
12. Does economic empowerment ensure women to have rights and a say in decision making that is equal to their male counterparts? How much do you earn monthly? How much (if married) does your husband earn monthly? How do you both feel about your relative earnings?
13. Do you think a higher educational qualification and economic empowerment are associated in marriages and families with better treatment of women? Can you expand on this please?

14. Do you think you have power and control over your life , income, holding property , purchasing property and selling out property?
15. Do you think you are being consulted in all family decisions as an equal to your father/brother/husband/son? If yes, then please expand on it.
16. Do you consult with your husband about your health and family planning matters? If yes , then please expand on it.
17. How do you perceive the attitude of male colleagues at your work place towards you and the work that you produce?
18. How do you perceive the attitude of your family towards your outside work and work status?
19. How do you perceive the attitude of your neighbours towards your outside work and work status?
20. Do you think patriarchal system (Male dominance) and cultural values restrict women's access to participation in economic activities such as the job you are doing? If so, how? If not, why not?
21. Please can you tell me a story of something that has happened in your career that you think illustrates the difference or lack of difference between men and women working?

E: The Survey Questionnaire

Respondent No: _____

Your current position: _____

Personal Information

Below you will find a series of statements relating to your personal information. Please tick the most appropriate one:

1. Type of Family- Which of the following type of family you belong to?

- a. Joint family ☐ b. Nuclear Family ☐ c. Other ☐

2. Age- How old are you?

- a. under 24 years old ☐ b. 25-34 years old ☐ c. 35-44 years old ☐
d. 45-54years old ☐ e. Above 55 years old ☐

3. Marital Status- Which of the following describe your current marital status?

- a. Never married ☐ b. Married ☐ c. Widow ☐ d. Divorced ☐ e. Separated ☐

If married then number of children?

- a. One ☐ b. Two ☐ c. Three ☐ d. Four ☐ e. five or more ☐

4. Education- What is the highest educational qualification you hold?

- a. Graduate ☐ b. Masters ☐ c. Master of Philosophy ☐ d. Doctor of Philosophy ☐

5. Monthly income-How much monthly are you paid for your job?

- a. under Rs.20,000 ☐ b. Rs. 21,000 -40,000 ☐ c. Rs. 41,000-60,000 ☐
d. Rs.61,000-80,000 ☐ e. Rs. 81,000-100,000 ☐ f. Above Rs.100, 000 ☐

6. Years of work experience- How long have you been working with University of Sindh?

- a. Lesser than 5 years ☐ b. 5- 9 years ☐ c. 10-14 years ☐ d.15-19 years ☐ e. 20 and above ☐

A. My perception about my professional and household work

Below you will find a series of statements relating to your working experience in the University of Sindh. Please encircle the most appropriate answer: SA= Strongly Agree A= Agree N= Neutral D= Disagree SD= Strongly Disagree

1. I think working with educational institutions is more flexible and secure for women in Pakistan than other types of work.	SA	A	N	D	SD
2. I think my profession is an ideal for other women.	SA	A	N	D	SD
3. I think my profession is an ideal for my sisters/daughters.	SA	A	N	D	SD
4. I would like to see my daughter/sister to work with educational institutions.	SA	A	N	D	SD
5. I am satisfied with the level of my current position - it fits my qualifications and achievements.	SA	A	N	D	SD
6. I am satisfied with the working environment/conditions at my workplace.	SA	A	N	D	SD
7. I am satisfied with my monthly pay and other benefits given to me for my work.	SA	A	N	D	SD
8. I receive the right amount of recognition for my work.	SA	A	N	D	SD
9. I am aware of the opportunities for advancement that exist in the University (workplace) for me.	SA	A	N	D	SD
10. The overall attitude of my boss/head to my professional work and me is positive/supportive.	SA	A	N	D	SD
11. The overall attitude of my male colleagues to my professional work and me is positive/supportive.	SA	A	N	D	SD
12. The overall attitude of my female colleagues to my professional work and me is positive/supportive.	SA	A	N	D	SD
13. The overall attitude of my family in relation to my professional work is positive/supportive.	SA	A	N	D	SD
14. The overall attitude of my neighbours in relation to my professional work is positive/supportive.	SA	A	N	D	SD

15. The overall attitude of society towards working women in Pakistan is positive/supportive.	SA	A	N	D	SD
16. I think the university management is supportive for female employees.	SA	A	N	D	SD
17. I feel I am considered inferior to men doing the same role.	SA	A	N	D	SD
18. I intend to change my current profession in the future as men in my workplace.	SA	A	N	D	SD
19. I think the social status of working women is higher than that of full-time housewives in Pakistan	SA	A	N	D	SD
20. I think my family is happy with my professional work.	SA	A	N	D	SD
21. I think my family recognizes my contribution to the family's income.	SA	A	N	D	SD
22. I think my family feels proud of my professional work.	SA	A	N	D	SD
23. I think a positive change in social status came through my professional career.	SA	A	N	D	SD
24. I think my professional career has given me equal social status to men.	SA	A	N	D	SD
25. I think that my professional role is clashing with household chores.	SA	A	N	D	SD

B. Power, control and decision making

Below you will find a series of statements. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with them by encircling the most appropriate answer: SA= Strongly Agree A= Agree N= Neutral D= Disagree SD= Strongly Disagree NA=Not Applicable

26. I think that university education empowers women in decision making within family.	SA	A	N	D	SD
27. I think that university education increases women's say in decision-making processes in the workplace.	SA	A	N	D	SD
28. I think that university education increases women's say in decision-making processes in the community.	SA	A	N	D	SD
29. I think that university education increases women's say in decision-making processes at the national level.	SA	A	N	D	SD
30. I think that university education of women protects them from home based violence or abuse.	SA	A	N	D	SD
31. I think that economic empowerment ensures women's participation in decision making within family.	SA	A	N	D	SD
32. I think economic empowerment increases women's say in decision-making processes in the workplace.	SA	A	N	D	SD
33. I think economic empowerment increases women's say in decision-making processes in the community.	SA	A	N	D	SD
34. I think economic empowerment increases women's say in decision-making processes at the national level.	SA	A	N	D	SD
35. I think the economic empowerment of women protects them from home-based violence or abuse.	SA	A	N	D	SD
36. I possess control over my own generated income and resources.	SA	A	N	D	SD
37. I have control over my own life.	SA	A	N	D	SD
38. I possess all powers to buy and sell out my property.	SA	A	N	D	SD

39. I myself buy my own items like clothing, cosmetics etc.	SA	A	N	D	SD
40. My husband helps me with the child-care.	SA	A	N	D	SD
41. My husband helps me with the housework.	SA	A	N	D	SD
42. I consult with my husband about family planning.	SA	A	N	D	SD
43. I think I am being consulted in all family decisions as an equal to my husband/father/brother/son.	SA	A	N	D	SD
44. I enjoy the right to express my opinion even if I disagree with my father/brother/husband/son.	SA	A	N	D	SD
45. I can go to see my relatives or friends without seeking the permission from my father/brother/husband.	SA	A	N	D	SD
46. If I want I can travel alone form one city to another city.	SA	A	N	D	SD
47. If I want I can travel alone form my country to another country.	SA	A	N	D	SD
48. I received due share of inheritance form my parents.	SA	A	N	D	SD
49. I think my educational qualification and economic empowerment has enabled me to define my own choices and self-interests.	SA	A	N	D	SD